SAINT BERNARDINE OF SIENA

SERMONS

Selected and edited by

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Translated by

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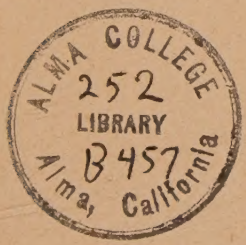

SIENA
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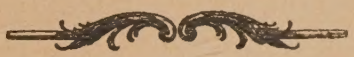
TO THE REVEREND FATHER **PASCHAL ROBINSON** O. F. M. WHO MADE THE PREPARATION OF THIS TRANSLATION POSSIBLE, NOT ONLY BY HIS INTEREST AND ENCOURAGEMENT BUT EVEN BY GIVING MUCH VALUABLE TIME TO READING AND REVISING THE MANUSCRIPT, THE EDITOR AND THE TRANSLATOR WISH TO EXPRESS THEIR TRUE APPRECIATION AND THEIR GRATITUDE.



Sano di Pietro - Saint Bernardine - Fresco in the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena

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PREFACE

To the humble Franciscan Friar Bernardine Albizzeschi, a member of one of the oldest Sienese families, students of the Middle Ages are looking back to-day with peculiar interest and affection.

Since the beginning of the last century such distinguished men of letters as Zambrini and Milanesi have made accessible to a wider literary circle than that of special students of the period, the rich treasure of that vernacular of the fifteenth century in which Albizzeschi preached. Zambrini has published a hundred or more volumes of moral tales and fables taken from the Sermons, and Milanesi two of the most delightful and interesting of the sermons themselves, delivered in August, 1427, to a great multitude assembled to hear them in the historic *Campo* of Siena. The figure of Saint Bernardine was later brought into historical prominence through the publication in 1880 by Cav. Luciano Bianchi of the forty-five sermons delivered in the *Campo* and in the *Piazza S. Francesco* between the fifteenth of August and the end of September, 1427, which revealed how important an influence Albizzeschi exerted upon the municipal laws and the customs of the first half of the fifteenth century.

The result of this revival of interest in Saint Bernardine's work has been shown in the amount of scholarly research undertaken in our own century, especially by others than Italians; in the publication of many important articles in foreign reviews; and above all in the Life of Saint Bernardine by Paul Thureau-Dangin. This has been translated from French

into many languages, into Italian by that learned scholar Monsignor Telemaco Barbetti.

Saint Bernardine was born in 1380, the year in which Saint Catherine Benincasa died. He accomplished as much for the religious life of Italy as Saint Catherine did for the political life when she reëstablished the Pontifical Seat in the Eternal City. For about forty-four years Albizzeschi preached almost unceasingly in cities and villages, more often in the piazzas than in the churches. Here multitudes assembled at dawn or at sunset, and were held entranced by his eloquence.

By great good fortune many of the popular sermons have come down to our own time, and this through a shearer of cloth, Benedetto of Master Bartholomew, who played the part of amanuensis in a most remarkable manner. As he stood listening to the sermons he took them down with a style on wax-covered tablets, and afterwards, when he went back to his shop, wrote out on parchment everything he had noted on his tablets. In this admirable piece of patient work the devout Sienese shearman unconsciously performed a task of priceless worth, for it was to preserve to posterity some part at least of our Saint's invaluable preaching.

We may well ask why the sermons of Saint Bernardine are not better known and generally read to-day, delightful as they are for spontaneity and transparent clearness of thought, and for the vigour and sincerity of their popular style. The reason probably is that as Saint Bernardine was forced to follow in general the rules of the school of preaching of his day, we often find the reading of his sermons difficult because of dry scholastic disquisitions and involved and tedious mechanical divisions and subdivisions of the subject matter. But once these give place to the expression of deep feeling, and heart and soul are laid bare with the frank naturalness and ingenuous

piety of the Franciscan, then the characteristic grace of his style reveals itself, the colouring grows vivid, and the language fluent and direct, as his words ring out in the golden Sienese idiom of that classic century. Abstract arguments as well give way to glowing images, to moral fables and to illustrations conveyed through that masterful gift of narrative which was of so immense advantage to him in his battle against the general corruption of the time then invading Italy.

The reason for publishing this edition of the sermons is therefore obvious. Selections have been carefully made which are of moral value to our time, and which derive a peculiar charm from the unusual character of the vivid little stories and anecdotes, and of the moral fables and illustrations, closely resembling in their sweet simplicity and ingenuous piety the *Fioretti* of the great Saint Francis.

It has been objected, it is true, that in the outpouring of his torrent of eloquence Saint Bernardine made use of words and conceptions which may justly be criticised as broad and free. But restrained expression could not satisfy such a soul as his, so primitive in its simplicity, so ruthless in the intent to pluck up by the roots whatever evil he found. If the saintliness of his life had not permitted him this striking and effective manner of speech he would never have reaped so splendid a harvest of glorious results, or won so holy a victory in the battle he waged for the salvation of souls and for the betterment of the deplorable social conditions of his century.

To the memory of this glorious Sienese Saint, who so nobly adorns the history of his country, the editor offers this volume as the filial tribute of a fellow citizen.

N. O.

I. *Of the marvellous care which God exerts over human nature, and how God watches over us with His Angels.*

The soul is above all corporeal beings.

1. — The soul is above all corporeal beings and is more noble than any material thing. This soul is above everything on the whole earth, in dignity and power; above the water, above the fire, above the air, above everything in which the said elements have any part. The soul is greater than the heavens of the Moon, and of Mercury and of Venus, of the Sun, of Mars, of Jupiter, of Saturn, and of all their signs, and it is greater than the seventy-two constellations. But the angels are greater than the soul, and these angels rule us and guide us, and enlighten us in all those things which we should do. It is the angels who have led you hither into this *Campo* [1] to listen, and the whole *Campo* is full of angels, who make you pay heed to the words which I speak to the glory of God, and to which you pay such heed that if it were Saint Paul himself preaching to you, I believe you could not listen with more attention. And whence doth this arise? Surely not from me, but from the angels, because we have no power in ourselves to use any strength of ours except with the help of the angels who guide us. In ourselves we have only right intention, the will to act, and after this good will doth come to us we are impelled to the performance of it. For this reason saith David: *Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum,*

[1] The famous Piazza, now called Piazza Vittorio Emanuele; here is the magnificent palace of the Commune, near one of the doors of which the Saint used to deliver these sermons to the people.

in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. Verily then thou canst come near to understanding in what way the planets govern these bodies of ours while the blessed spirits govern the soul. O lamentable indeed would it be if the contrary were true, that is to say, if the body ruled the angels! If things went after this fashion, the ass would govern his master, who truly would be most excellently guided!

The constellations have no power to influence human beings.

2. — Where is the man that believes in the influence of the constellations? If there be anyone who still is guided by what they foretell, — as for instance, such a one shall grow handsome, such a one bold, this man shall become wanton, and that man shall come to a bad end, — do not hold such opinions or believe the writings that teach such things; for in truth the soul cannot be governed by any material thing, neither by the constellations, nor by the planets, nor by the elements, and so in like manner the constellations have no power over a human being, as if he had not free will to act or not to act according to his own feeling! O hearken now! I wish to make the truth plain to thee, so that thou shalt perceive and believe it, and not be deceived by falsehood. See this then, and consider it: God made all things and established the order of them, and gave its own separate office to each one. The earth doth perform its duty above all by giving of its increase to sustain men; likewise fire, likewise water, likewise the heavens, all things that he made, he made for the sake of man. And if it be true that God hath made all things for man and for his good, how then canst thou believe that man is forced to do only as thou sayest, that is, as the planets or the constellations direct him?

Man has the free will to do good or evil.

3. — And if thou dost still persist in the wish to speak and to think in this thine own way, listen to what I have to say to thee and draw thy conclusion from it. If the planets are able to make thee do wrong, and thou doest it, God would not be just in condemning thee to suffer punishment for it. Look now at the matter from the other side: if the constellation or the planet maketh thee to do anything good, by the same reasoning God would not be

just if he rewarded thee, because thou didst not do it of thyself and of thine own will, but wast forced to do it by the power of the planet or the constellation. Believe nothing then except that which the Holy Church holds true and her Doctors hold true, and which thou canst perceive for thyself; namely, that man is left free to choose whether he will do evil or good as pleaseth him. And from this freedom of choice it doth ensue that then God doth punish or reward according to the works that we do. Go, read in the first chapter of Genesis: When he had made and created the heavens, then the dry land appeared, and waters were parted from waters, and the Sun was made, the fishes of the sea were made, and the birds of the air, and then man was made of earth; and when these things were made, *vidit Deus cuncta quae fecerat, et erant valde bona* God saw all the things that he had made, and they were very good.

Away then with any belief contrary to this one, if thou hast held any such, and hold to the right one. But answer me now with reason, for I wish to reason with thee. Dost thou believe that God is good? Thou answerest, Yes. Tell me further: Dost thou believe that the constellations have more power than thy will? If thou dost consent to do what they make thee do, thou sayest that thou art compelled, and that thou canst not act otherwise. Answer me further: who is more guilty, thou who doest the wrong, or the planet which compelleth thee to do it? Answer thou, and tell me, is not that one more guilty who doth compel thee to do the wrong? And I tell thee then that God is more guilty, either than thou or the planet, because he made the planet which doth compel thee to do wrong. So that God, being the first cause, is worst of all, and now then thou hast it in order: if thou doest evil, thou art wicked; if thou sayest: I am forced to do so, then the one who doth force thee is still more wicked; and whoever made that one must be more wicked than either one of you, — that is he must be worst of all. And thus you may see that if you have held this belief, which is a wicked one, you should hold it no longer, but believe instead that man may choose freely whether to do good or evil, and may not be forced to do anything contrary to his will. O craz'd-headed

madmen, to wish to believe that which hath naught to do with reason! know that this is a link with the devil!

It is possible to work against the planets and the constellations.

4. — But I wish to show thee that it is possible to work against the planets and the constellations, and to show this to thee by a proof so clear that thou wilt not be able in any way or manner to persist in an opposite opinion. The physicians who understand the planets and the signs and the constellations from which we have our governance, when they are to give a medicine to a patient, give it with some little thing, some herb, or some kind of water, or some other drug from the apothecary, in such a way that these little things may take away its power from that planet which is in the ascendant. And thus it is indeed most clear that a very little thing can take away its power from the part of the creation which is above us. O think then how much greater power hath the free will to act as it will, contrary to the influence of these same planets! Hearken now to this saying of the pagans — whether true or not I cannot say : *Sapiens dominabitur astra* The wise man will rule the stars. See then that it is possible to resist the power which the planets have over us; and not alone is this true, that they cannot deprive us of power, but a little thing can deprive them of power, so that they may have none over man. Know that the devil hath taught the opposite of this to the malice of men, to bring them into danger and also those who listen to them. Have faith therefore in that which thou seest made so clear by reason. Who dost thou believe is more powerful, God or the angels? God. Who is more powerful, the angels or the soul? The angels. Which has more power, the soul or the constellations? The soul. Which has more power, the constellations or the human body? The body. Which has more power, the reason or the senses? The reason. Which has more, Holy Church and her Doctors or thine own opinion? Holy Church. Attach thyself then to that which Holy Church teaches and believes and holds, and forsake that which in thine own opinion thou hast held true; for free will was given to man, and hath never been taken from him, and never will be while he shall exist in mortal flesh.

II. *Treats of the preacher and the listener, and of the part that belongeth to each.*

That which thou hast and knowest all cometh from the word of God.

1. — O how many of you here present this morning will say: I knew not what I did, I thought I did well while rather I was doing evil; and remembering this sermon they will say to themselves: O now am I enlightened as to what I should do, addressing these words to God: *Verbum tuum lucerna mea est* Thy word is my enlightenment. And when thou art about to make some contract in thy business, thou wilt pause first to think, saying: what said Friar Bernardine of such matters? He told me, in such matters you must do thus or thus; that is evil, that is not commendable, but this is good, and this I wish to do. And in thiswise it will befall thee merely because of the words which thou hast heard preached to thee. But tell me: what would become of this world, I mean of the Christian faith, if there were no preaching? Within a very little our faith would have perished, for we should believe nothing of that which we now believe. And because of this Holy Church hath ordered that every Sunday there shall be preaching, — much or little, but some preaching. And she hath ordered thee to go to hear Mass, and if of these two duties thou canst perform but one, that is either hear Mass or hear the preaching, thou shouldst rather lose Mass and hear the preaching; since the reason for this doth appear plainly, thou dost not so endanger thy soul by not hearing Mass as by not listening to the preaching. Canst thou not perceive and understand without further argument? For tell me, should you believe in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar if this had not been preached in

holy sermons? Thou hast learned to believe in the Mass only from preaching. More than this, how ever shouldst thou have known what sin is, if not from preaching? What wouldst thou know of hell, if there were no preaching? What wouldst thou know of any good work, or how thou shouldst perform it, if not from preaching, or what wouldst thou know of the glories of Heaven? All these things that thou knowest came to thee through the words heard by thine ears, and it is in thiswise that thou comest by knowledge to faith, and that which thou knowest and which thou hast hath come all through the word of God. And this is a sovereign rule, that which we have of the faith of Jesus Christ hath come merely through preaching. And this faith will never perish while it shall be preached.

To discover whether a friar is good, he should be proved by the touchstone.

2. O, goldsmith, how dost thou prove gold? By what means dost thou prove it pure? By the touchstone. The touchstone tells you whether it be pure gold, or only half gold. And so silver may be proved by the touchstone, which shows at once if it be mixed with baser metal or if it be pure; and therefore I say that this touchstone is a necessity. If you would discover whether one of our friars is good, there is no way more sure to know this than to prove him by the touchstone, and so to find out if he be pure gold or if he be alloy[1]. If you see that one of us pursueth after gold or silver he cannot be good, since he doth act contrary to that which he hath promised. He hath promised perpetually to follow poverty, and chastity, and to stand under obedience. If he doth the contrary of this, he is not good, and you should beware, and should prove him by the touchstone. And because of this I hold many hypocrites in hatred. Foh! I know not how to call them! And I say this because I have gone about hither and thither, and also very many of my companions have gone far and near, and they have been tested and proven, for they have said: I belong to Friar Bernardine. And there have been some as well who have made themselves out to be my nephews, and I have found them that they went about gathering in rings and bits of broken silver, giving out

[1] That is, if he be wholly virtuous, or if he have vices as well as virtues.

that they wished to make of them chalices and crosses for churches. And there be many of these that go about and do as I have said. You then be upon your guard, that when one of these cometh your way you believe not in him, because there is a very great number of them. Put them to the proof to see whether they be of my family, and see to it that they be proven by the touchstone. You will know them in the matter of money, [1] and will know if they belong to me or no. I have very many companions who are good and are of such a kind as lead good lives, and yield such fruit that it is a marvel. Of this number is Friar Matthew of Sicily, who converted a king to the Christian faith, with his whole country ; by whose enemies, had he not succeeded, there would have been a very different clamour made about it. He performed many marvels, and among other things know you what he did? In six days he had made a dwelling-place for our friars, and it was a pious and beautiful thing to do. And then he performed another great deed in that he burned 2700 draught-boards in one day at Barzalona, many of which were of ivory, and also many chess-boards, and he converted so many souls that I cannot tell you how many, so great was the number of them. And more than this, he had all trailing gowns cut short throughout the whole country. O woman ! thou who wearest a trailing gown, it is to thee I would say : If thou wearest it, thou workest indeed to thine own injury. In an evil moment didst thou put such a garment on thy back, since it will be the occasion of much suffering to thy soul in the other world, and perchance in this world as well. I have also among my companions another whose name is Friar John of Apulia, and he also performs many great deeds. I have wished to tell these things for this reason because there are those who are good and those who are evil. *Nolite credere.* Believe not in them, when you find them of that habit I have told you of, but believe in them only when you find them in the spirit of good, bringing you true teaching, then you, receiving it from them, test them by it. And know there were such false hypocrites as these even

[1] By their attitude towards money.

in the time of the apostles. Had I fallen in with one such, who was heard from not a long time ago, I would have ducked him well, in faith, I would have doused him, head over ears [1], *et cetera!* Home again! [2] I tell thee that making the proof in this way thou wilt know whether they are true or false, and now thou seest how gold and silver must be proven.

The word of God is helpful to man, either living or dead.

3. — O you who are cold and dead, go to the fount of life! O woman! in the morning when thou comest to the fount of life and of the teaching of God, to the sermon, leave not your husband abed, or your son, or your brother, but see to it that you wake him out of his sleep, and see to it that he also cometh to hear that which if he be dead will restore him to life [3]. O fellow-citizens! do you wish Siena to prosper? You tell me, yes. See to it then that you hear the word of God; have the ordinance proclaimed that not until after the sermon shall have been preached each morning shall any man open his shop. Ay me! Are you, or do you wish to be, worse than the last time [4]? I cannot believe that you are worse in respect of this; and I believe moreover that if you did well then you will do well now, and better. O! I hear that fellow yonder who saith, I could earn a soldo in the morning. Hearken to me, come to the sermon, because by hearing it thou wilt profit, while thou wouldst lose if thou camest not to hear it, because these are things ordered by God; for if something good hath been ordered by a city, this is an order from God.

Against him who cometh to the preaching and settleth himself to sleep.

4. — Being here present to listen thou wilt cleanse thyself of thy sins, and thus amending thyself, thou wilt come to warm thyself in the burning love of God. And so doing thou dost not despise the word of God, which word

[1] Here he refers to his adversaries, who had even denounced him to the Holy See as a heretic.

[2] The Saint very frequently makes use of this expression to mean: « Let us return to the subject. »

[3] These words, and others later, prove that in order to have the people present in large numbers, without interfering with their daily work, he used to deliver his sermons at daybreak, at the very hour of sunrise. Probably he celebrated Mass first in the Chapel of the Piazza, near which he always preached. B.

[4] The Saint had twice already delivered a series of long sermons in Siena: but each time that he came to his beloved city he preached to the people, on whatever subject the occasion demanded.

is the life of our spirit, because ofttimes a single word that thou hearest may be the beginning of thy salvation. Knowest thou not that Saint Peter preaching in Jerusalem, by a single word did convert many thousands of souls? Hast thou understood me, O woman, thou who sleepest over there? I fear not. I come here to bring you the word of God, and you settle yourselves to sleep, and I must break off my preaching to waken you out of your sleep, and moreover that man yonder saith: He hath little to do! Hear then this my answer to thee. Thou seest that the sun performs many duties: it giveth light, it drieth the unbaked bricks, it warmeth man; but I say to thee who sleepest that thou sinnest. Must I make this clear? If a woman ask for the priest, that she may receive communion, and then if she settle herself to sleep, dost thou not believe that she sinneth? Saint Augustine saith that the woman or the man who goeth to a sermon and letteth the word of God pass by doth sin in as grievous a manner as that one who doth ask to receive communion and then through his carelessness doth let the host fall to the ground. But there is this difference, however, that carelessness is a venial sin, but this is a mortal sin, to have not the will to listen when you are able to hear.

III. *Here is said how you should forsake evil and do good.*

Punctuality is becoming in hearing preaching.

I have praised Siena for this, and with justice, that you come always betimes to the preaching. Of that which is good one must say well. And I say that your having this good custom is the most hopeful token of a wish to return to God and to receive his aid. And I say that so you should be able to understand and to perform better far than many others. and take heed to that which I shall say to you. When a man heareth preaching were he the most dull of all men in the world, if he listen to the whole of it he understandeth much. And if a man of most excellent understanding come to the preaching after a part of it hath been said, he listeneth for a while at the least before he doth understand anything of it. And he therefore who arriveth at the beginning heareth the foundations, and heareth word by word how the house is built and how it goeth up continually higher and higher, by little and little. And for this I praise you, and in this you do well indeed. And you have also another good custom in that you hasten not to go away before the whole hath been preached. Consider in your minds for example's sake that a man wish to sell a pair of capons: if their heads were wanting, think you he would ever sell them, or if they were without wings or tails? And so I would say of the preaching: if thou dost not hear it from the beginning to the middle and so to the end, thou canst never understand it well, and for this reason I say, it is needful to come betimes. Therefore the scholar, (and there are such in truth) if he should go to hear the lecture when the master had already delivered half of it, Oh, if later he shall

become « Doctor » he may well be called a sorry *Messer Doctor!* Therefore I say to you, Punctuality! and wanting this nothing can be performed. In everything that you do be orderly and act betimes. And therefore, O woman, be orderly! If thou hast the meat to cook before thou comest to the preaching see that thou hast it bought, and that thou dost rise with the Sovana [1], and that thou dost put the meat upon the fire, and dost skim off the grease; then clothe thyself, and it will be half cooked before thou must set out, and thou wilt have but to warm it again. When thou shalt leave, then it will be fully cooked and so thou shalt give something to the temporal and to the spiritual, and in this manner all will go well, and thou wilt come to the preaching with a clear mind and not with a distracted mind. And this is natural; for at first when a man riseth it will always seem to him as if his brains were addled, but when he hath been up for a little while at the least, it seems so no longer. And if thou dost rise and dost come presently to the sermon, thou art scarce awake when thou dost arrive there, for on the way thou still slumberest as it were. And if thou comest at midnight for the sermon, because of the night thou hast passed without sleep thou sleepest during the preaching; therefore arise, as I have told thee, a little betimes, and come to the sermon, and thou wilt be awake in both body and mind. For if thou shouldst not perform the duties of thy household, either cooking or other things, perchance thy husband will be unwilling that thou shouldst come to the preaching.

Of a man who setteth out to walk and falleth in with another whom he hath never seen before.

2. — If sometimes it befalleth that in a sermon thou wilt hear a thing that thou hast heard at another time before, be not troubled by this, for however it may be that which thou hearest is helpful to thee; and see now whether I do not speak truly. If thou hast heard it before, it did not then perhaps pierce and penetrate well into thy mind, and take heed to this example, which comes from Saint Gregory, of a man who setteth out to walk and falleth in with another whom he hath never seen before. One knoweth not who

[1] At dawn. « Sovana » is the name of the largest bell of the Duomo of Siena, which rings every morning at sunrise; it is so called because the Sienese took it from the bell-tower of the magnificent cathedral of the deserted city Sovana.

the other is, nor doth the other know who he is, nor whence he cometh. One of them to learn something about his companion, saith: Whence comest thou, friend? He doth reply: « I am from Milan, am I [1]. » Now he hath learned thus much. Next he doth ask: « What is thy trade? » « I am a weaver of fustian. » Now he knoweth also this. « Whither goest thou? » « I am going to Rome. » Now he knoweth so much more. They go along together in this manner and arrive at the inn, and he doth treat thee with honour. Thou knowest then that he is gracious, thou seest also that he goeth not beyond the allowed stint if he drink, and further also that he is of good custom and condition; then when they set out again he wisheth to pay the reckoning. And on the journey if he see that his companion is weary he saith: « Give me thy knapsack that I may help thee; » thou seest thus that he is kindly. If they eat together, he doth carve, wisheth to serve, and putteth all the best morsels on the side of the platter for the other; and also by this thou seest that he is well brought up. If they go to bed, he giveth the better side to his companion. Then when they are abed the first asketh the other if he hath a father; he answereth yes, and telleth that he is old and in his dotage, and that in his day he was a most worthy person. Thou wilt also see him overcome by weakness from the fatigue of walking; thou wilt see him grow pale, wilt hear his speech fail, so that he will speak lower than he hath been speaking. And observe this, that first thou knewest not who he was, then being accompanied with him for so long thou hast learned who he is, his name, whence he cometh, what he is about, and even his manners and his habits. And having to do with him so much, thou hast even seen within into him, since that weakness which came from within, thou hast perceived it because of the familiarity thou hast had with him.

Of a holy father who taught a hermit who was slow and dull how to hear the word of God, since he could remember naught.

3. — There are certain men who say: I go not to the preaching because I can remember naught. Hearken! Listen to this example which once befell, and which perhaps will be of use and will help you to remember. There was a holy father, who living as he did in a very humble little cell in

[1] Here Saint Bernardine imitates the dialect of Lombardy.

a wood, had with him one of his good little hermits, who could remember naught of that which he heard for his instruction, and for this reason he never went to hear preaching or aught else. And when he was telling to the holy father the reason because of which he went not to hear the preaching he said: I remember naught. Then said this holy father: Take this little pan, for he had a little pan in which to cook fish, and he said: Boil this water, and when the water is boiling he says: Fill a glass full with it and pour it into this little pan which is all greasy. The other did so. Go, pour it out without cleansing it. And he did so, and the father said: Look now, and see if it be as greasy as it was at first. He said that it was less greasy. The father said: Put some water in it once again, and pour it out. He did so. And this time also was it cleaner. And thus the father made him to do many times, and each time was it cleaner. And he said then to him: Thou sayest that thou dost remember naught. Knowest thou the reason of this? Because thou art fat-witted, and thus greasy like the pan. Go, and pour some water into thy mind, and thou wilt see that it will be cleansed. Pour in more and again it will become cleaner, and the more often thou shalt hear the word of God, the more shall thy mind be cleansed and thou wilt be able to hear the word of God, until that thy mind shall be wholly cleansed and clarified.

IV. *Backbiters are treated of with most beautiful examples.*

The tongue of a backbiter is like to the scorpion.

1. — Ofttimes the backbiter goeth about with a show of kindness and speaketh evil of others. He walketh under the shadow of a fair manner, seeming possessed of charity, and malice lurketh beneath. Knowest thou what he doth resemble? He is like to a canker, and outwardly he is glossed over, and such men as these when they wish to hide their malice do after this fashion ; ere they speak of a thing they send before an ambassador. And knowest thou who this ambassador is? They send forth a sigh, O, o! What aileth thee, eh? What is it? O, o, I have a great melancholy upon me! And then he will begin and will say: Brother, what I am about to say, I will say for a good purpose, God knoweth it (and he giveth him the sure token [1]), in faith I wish to tell it thee. Such an one hath done such and such a thing. Meseems that such another is doing a certain wrong, in my opinion. He doeth this or that, and to me it doth appear that he hath the wish to do thus and thus. And he will say very many things, and in all these he will lie in his throat. This evil tongue that doth in this way is like to the scorpion, which doth perform three things, and all maliciously. First, it licketh with its tongue ; second, it encircleth with its claws, third, with its tail it doth twist it, and lift it into the air, and then it doth bite. In this same manner doth the backbiter do.

The backbiter may be likened to the serpent which is called the basilisk.

2. — Thus such a backbiter may be likened to the serpent which is called the basilisk. This serpent which I tell you of is so poisonous that if it toucheth a spring of

[1] I. e., the sigh.

water at once this is wholly dyed and infected, so deadly is its poison. In like manner doeth the evil tongue, for with its wicked speech it can at once poison a city, a country, a province.

Do that which concerneth thee thyself.

3. — If thou seest that another doth evil, correct him not with a slandering tongue, but with a kind manner, as the Church hath taught thee. There are very many who see no other evil than that which their neighbour doth perform. Art thou here, thou who seest no wrongdoing but that of others? Pay heed to that which the Gospel saith when it telleth thee that thou seest the mote in the eye of thy neighbour and seest not the beam in thine own. And therefore I say to these, see to it that thou dost correct thine own defect, and so thou wilt do better than if thou dost correct others while thou thyself remainest in sin. O women, to what are ye bound? Know ye what? Both that ye shall perform good and that ye shall give good example.

To give good example belongeth most of all to the priest.

4. — And to give good example belongeth most of all to the priest, rather than to any other person, as thou hast it in the Decretals; and I say that the priest doth more grievous wrong by giving bad example merely by scandalizing his neighbour by a wicked life, than if a layman were to go out to rob in the highway. The reason is this; that he who standeth in the highway doth rob the man who passeth by, and doth take from him his money, his horse, his garments, and all that which he findeth, but the other with his evil example doth make away with both soul and body of the man whom he doth scandalize thereby, and leaveth him to say and to do evil and to commit sin.

When a ship is wholly shattered in a tempest, everyone endeavoureth to save himself.

5. — Knowest thou that which thou shouldst do? Do as I shall tell thee, and lay up this example in thy memory. A man setteth out to sea, and there are in one and the same boat fathers and sons, the wife, brothers, and servants, all of one household. And when they are thus out at sea, there cometh a tempest so violent that it dasheth the ship against a rock. The ship is wholly shattered: at once everyone endeavoureth to save himself, one upon a log, one upon a plank. There are tiny children, there are elder ones of five years, of ten, of twenty years; and so everyone doth aid himself as far as he is able. There will be one child

who will say to his father: O my father, help me! for if thou helpest me not, I shall drown; help me, for I can hold out no longer! And the father, methinks, would reply: Child, help thyself, for I have so great difficulties in helping myself, that more is beyond me; for the father knoweth that if he attempt to go to the aid of his son, they will both perish. And therefore lay up this example in thy heart: wish not to practise such rashness; busy not thyself so much about the deeds of others. Doh! Hast thou heard that any man increaseth his substance who doth busy himself about the affairs of others? Not I, in faith! and therefore I say, do that which concerneth thee. And the wise man speaketh no evil of the deeds of others, instead forsooth he even saith little about his own concerns. And he who is a natural and an upright man seeketh ever to correct his own evil practices and doth not sift the intentions of others.

The backbiter is like the man who hath a heap of dust.

6. — Gregory gives us the example of a backbiter, which is a very excellent one, and saith that he is like a man who hath a heap of dust; and the wind bloweth against him and he hath his eyes turned towards the dust in such a way that it bloweth into his eyes, and his eyes are filled with dust, because he looked at naught else but at that heap. And then he can see clearly neither his own deeds nor the deeds of others.

The slandering tongue is made in the likeness of a mad dog.

7. — The cursed slandering tongue is raging mad. Knowest thou how it is made? It is made like the mad dog, and knowest thou how the mad dog doth? What doth he do? He holdeth his mouth open, he hath a bloody mouth, all inflamed with rage from biting. The open mouth doth signify that he ever speaketh evil, and that he speaketh at most times when he should be silent, and that ofttimes he is silent when he should speak; and this is the habit and condition of the raging backbiter. He hath a bloody mouth, because their delight is ever in devouring blood and raw flesh. Such as these may be likened to those curs who stand about the shop of a butcher, who when they see a strange dog coming, run all together towards him and sniff at him, and by his smell they know that he is not one of them. When they have found out this they begin presently to snarl

and to show their teeth ; and when he beginneth to bark all these curs rush upon him and one doth bite him here and one doth bite him there, in such wise that he is all torn by them ; and so they chase him away, saying : Thou art not one of us. They do not thus when one of their own goeth there; then how they sniff him, and caress him, knowing that he is one of their slandering companions, and it doth seem as if they would say, one to another: He is one of us. And though he be not known to them all, that one who knoweth him saith: Come, stop here, for thou art one of us, do that which thou shouldst do.

The stench of such as these may be likened to the stench of wells.

8. — And know thou that whosoever hath this vice, his mouth stinketh, and learn, O, ye women, and ye also, men, that the stench of such as these may be likened to the stench of wells ; for thou seest a well that sendeth forth a stench from its mouth, and such is theirs; their stench is in their mouths. And therefore see that every time thou hearest one of these who speaketh evil of others, as soon as thou hearest him, close thy nose and do so [1], and say: Oh, how he stinks ! And if he continue with his speech continue thou too with thine, and turn thyself away, and say : Oh, he stinks with a fearful stench ! retiring thyself a little. And do ye so, children ; forget not whensoever you hear someone who speaketh evil of people at once to close your noses and say : Oh, how he stinks ! And if you do this, never will the stench of anything wicked come to you. And I wish you to know this, that because they stink the fact is that when they find themselves together they do not seem to one another fetid. Dost thou ask the reason of this? If there be gathered together one hundred who all stink, the stench is great among them ; so that if one or two more should come, it doth not seem to them as if the stench were greater than before, for they stink so much among themselves that they do not perceive the stench of others.

Such as these may be likened to the hedgehog.

9. — Such men as these may be likened to the hedgehog, which stinks by its nature. I mean not the chestnut-burr [2], I speak of the hedgehog, which doth throw itself

[1] He accompanies these words with the gesture, holding his nose.

[2] The Italian word for hedgehog *riccio*, has also the meaning « chestnut-burr ».

upon the grapes, and which hath quills so sharp that as often as it doth roll itself over the grapes, it is all covered with them, and so doth carry them away. Of which hedgehog I say that it doth emit a foul odour from either end.

They may be likened also to the lion.

10. — He is also like to the lion whose mouth is fetid; and as the lion devoureth creatures, so doth the backbiter; with his words he killeth everyone. And therefore it is said: *Susceperunt me sicut leo paratus ad praedam.* They have poisoned me like as doth the lion ready to spring upon his prey. And such a one as this spreadeth infection throughout the world, and poisoneth every creature who doth hear the backbiter if he be not aware and be not upon his guard.

The backbiters devour, because to speak evil of others is to devour them.

11. — Backbiters devour, because to speak evil of others is to devour. O, women, have ye never broken the fast of Lent? Have ye never eaten meat on Friday or Saturday, or the eve of the day commanded by the Church to be kept holy? Saith this woman: No, God knoweth I have never eaten it. Thou liest in thy throat, for thou hast eaten it many a time, and hast eaten it raw, in thy cruelty. Hast thou slandered anyone? Yes. And whom hast thou slandered? It was a man. A man hast thou eaten. O I slandered a priest. A priest hast thou eaten. I slandered a bishop. A bishop hast thou devoured. I slandered a cardinal. A cardinal hast thou devoured. I slandered the Pope. The Pope thou hast devoured. And thou, a nun; a nun hast thou devoured; aud thou, thy neighbour; thy neighbour hast thou devoured.

V. *Here the evil tongue and remedies against backbiters are treated of again.*

Of a holy father who taught a young monk of his to scorn the world.

1. — There was once a holy father who was very experienced in the ways of this world, and who had observed that a man could not live here in any way whatsoever and hinder from slandering him those who wished to do so, and he said therefore to one of his young monks: Son, come with me, and bring with thee our little ass. The young monk obeyed and brought the ass, and he mounted it, and the youth followed after the holy father on foot, and as they passed amongst the people, there was in one place much mire and deep, and one man crieth out and saith: What! look there at him, how cruel is that wretched monk, who permitteth the other one to go on foot through so much mud, while he himself doth ride. When he heard these words at once he got down, and when he had got down he made the young man to mount, and going on a little farther, he went along urging the ass forward through this mud. And another man saith: Ho! see the strange behaviour of that man, who hath a beast and is old, and goeth on foot, and permitteth the youth to ride, who would not consider fatigue or the mud. Methinketh this is madness in him! And moreover they might both ride on the ass if they wished and it would be far better so. The holy father then approacheth the ass, and he also mounteth. And as they were going forward in this way, there was a man who said: How now! look at those two who have one ass and both are mounted on it. I think they care naught for the little ass, which it would not be a great marvel to see fall down dead. Hearing this also the holy father at once

got down, and made the youth get down, and they both go on foot behind it, calling out: gee up! and by little and little they went forward on their way, and another man saith: O see what madness this is in these two, who have an ass, and walk through mud so deep. The holy father having perceived that no man can live in any manner of way so that people murmur not against him, said to the young monk: come away, let us go home. And when they were in the cell the holy father said, Come here, my Son; hast thou paid heed to the fable of the ass? Saith the young monk: Of what? O hast thou not perceived that in whatsoever way we travelled ill was said of us? If I rode and thou went on foot, ill was said of it, and it was said that because thou wert a youth I should have put thee up on the ass. I got down and put thee up there, and another spoke ill of this also, thou being mounted, and said that I who was old ought to mount the beast, and that thou who wert a young man oughtest to go on foot. Then again we both mounted, and thou knowest that they said ill also of this, and that we were cruel to the ass, because of this burden, which was too heavy. Then moreover we both dismounted, and thou knowest that ill was said also of this, and that it was madness in us to go on foot since we had an ass. And therefore, my son, lay up in thy mind this which I shall say to thee: know that he who remaineth in the world performing as much good as he is able, and exerting himself to do as much as in him lies, cannot do so that evil shall not be said of him. And therefore, my son, heed it not and attend not to it, and have no desire to be of it; for whoever remaineth therein in any manner whatsoever doth always lose his soul, and from it there cometh forth naught else than sin; and therefore despise it, and do good ever. And let who will say either the evil or the good that they do say.

Of a matron, a widow of Rome, who wishing to take a second husband, desired first to test the opinion of the world.

2. — Thou hast also another example of a wise and good matron of Rome, who had been left a widow and was young and rich; and who being of a sober mind did not wish ever to fall into dishonour, and yet since she was young and beautiful she was fearful, and said within herself: I do not know whether I shall be able to remain a widow.

Lo ! If I take a husband, what will be said of me? It will be said that I could not remain without one. And yet desiring within herself to take a husband, she wished first to test the opinion of the people, and she chose this way. She had a horse flayed and she said to one of the servants of her household : Mount this horse, and go throughout Rome, and pay heed to what doth befall, and to whatever is said of the horse. The servant mounted on the horse goeth straightway throughout Rome. Happy was he who could run to look upon this flayed horse ! And having been abroad all day, he returned to the house in the evening. The woman asks her servant : What was said of this horse throughout Rome? He replied : O - oh ! All Rome ran to see this horse, and everyone said : What marvel is this ! so that it seemed he was indeed happy who saw it, so great was the crowd. The next day she had another horse flayed, and gave it to him, saving that he should do in the same manner that she had ordered in regard of the other. And when he returned in the evening, again the woman asked him how this matter of the horse had gone, and what had been said of it throughout Rome. He went through Rome in the same manner riding this horse, and not so great a number of people ran to look as they had done the preceding day in regard of the other. And when he returned home in the evening, again the woman asked him how the matter of the horse had gone, and what was said of it through Rome. Said he: Madame, but few ran to see it in comparison of the people there were yesterday. Again the following day she had another horse flayed, and in like manner sent this servant throughout Rome. And as he went throughout Rome barely a person went to see the horse. And when he returned to the house in the evening, she asketh him: What was said of this horse in Rome ? He doth reply : Madame, almost no person came to see it, and they say little thereof. Then she said within herself : O I may take a husband : for though people may wish to talk of me, they will talk but for a little while, and then they will tire; two or three days afterwards no one will talk of that which concerneth me. And as she thought so she did. She took a husband, and when she had taken him, straightway the people

commenced to say: What! fye! such and such a young woman hath taken a husband; she could not then remain as she was. And this endured for two or three days, and then they said almost nothing concerning her. And I say that she did excellently well.

The evil tongue is like unto nestlings.

3. — O little children, know ye what an evil tongue is like unto? It is like unto nestlings. Know ye what they do? They say without ceasing: *Si, si, si, si!* In like manner do many cursed backbiters who go about devising these slanders. And there are many such who would seem to grow fat, O - oh, be sure, when they have aught to say concerning a priest or a nun. O how fat they grow! *Si* and *si*, and I hear thus and thus, and such and such a thing did I see! Knowest thou what I have to say to thee: thou goest to the home of the devil! I tell thee that although thou hast knowledge of that thing, thou wilt do well to be right wary about telling it.

The man who layeth bare the hidden canker is like to the beetle.

4. — The man who layeth bare the hidden canker is like to the beetle. Such is the nature of the beetle that hardly doth dung lie upon the ground, — I know not what messengers he hath to tell him, — as soon as he knoweth it, and the very instant he knoweth it, he is straightway upon it, and in a moment of time he hath made a little ball of it, and with this he doth disport himself. So, I say, doth the backbiter. He maketh the little ball of dung and disporteth himself therewith, for how doth he get pleasure but out of hearing and reporting what is dishonest and shameful? Seest thou that which the beetle doth? The beetle never useth any other matter than dung; he maketh his ball, and setteth himself with head down, and legs in air, and backwards he goeth with it, and walketh along backwards in this manner until that he doth arrive at a ditch, and he and the ball of dung both fall into the ditch, and then he doth eat it. So, I say, doth the backbiter; he delighteth in this putrid and fetid stuff, and he doeth in the same manner as the beetle, who maketh the ball, and goeth backwards with it, and at length both he and the dung fall into the ditch. And this is because he doth not know how to perform any other practice, and doth never use any other matter. O

boys! When you shall hear one speak evil of another, call him a beetle.

The backbiter doeth as the hornet, and biteth like the fly.

5. — Hearken! Hast thou seen the horse-fly which alighteth on the ear, or let us speak of the hornet, which alighteth behind, and settleth there, and stings. Where when it hath stung, there ariseth a swelling. Precisely in this manner doth the backbiter, who stingeth and maketh a lump with his slanders, and knowest thou where he doth settle? He doth settle behind, and not in front. Likewise I ask thee further. Hast thou never seen those dogs with long ears? The fly is wont to settle on those ears, and the dog shaketh them, and it goeth away and then settleth back again; and he shaketh them and it doth settle there again, and in the end finally it bites, so that it maketh the blood to flow. In precisely this manner doth the backbiter; he settleth upon the ear in such a way as to bite, so that he maketh blood to flow, and this he doth suck.

Also he may be likened to the frog.

6. — Those who go about in this manner slandering others and wishing to hide themselves, may be likened to the frog. Knowest thou how the frog doth? The frog doth thus: *qua, qua, qua, qua!* [1] And when I have come to the ditch where they are, as soon as I draw near, in that same moment they vanish beneath, and not one maketh a sound. So doth the slanderer do, when he wisheth to slander anyone he useth that call: *qua, qua, qua!* He who heareth himself called cometh forward, Behold me here, what of me? There is naught more to it, — and knowest thou what he meriteth who slanders? According to the civil law, I mean? He meriteth to lose his head. And by the ecclesiastical law he is excommunicated.

He defends himself against those who have slandered him.

7. — But I wish to speak a little of myself. Oh, such things have been said concerning the doctrine that I have taught and imparted to you in my sermon! All of it teaching taken from the Gospel and from the holy Doctors, and it hath been said that I have said this or that, and such another thing, and that I have taught contrary to the Gospel; things have been put into my mouth which God knows I

[1] The Italian word *qua*, which Saint Bernardine uses to represent the sound made by the frog, means « here. »

never said them. And whence doth this come? This too from slanders. And therefore if ever thou hear again one who speaketh slander of me after I shall have left, away with thee! And stay not to listen, even if it should be in a sermon; take thyself off, and do not remain at the sermon if thou doth hear that he slandereth. [1] And to judge well, see that thou run first to thy conscience, and if thou knowest that his words are slanders stay not there. And if thou do not believe that which thou hearest, truly this is a good sign in thee, and ariseth from true zeal. Dost thou wish to be assured that thou wilt do well to get thence? If thou stay to hear, thou wilt not be able to profit neither believing nor unbelieving, and therefore the better part is to get thence.

He who stayeth to listen and he who speaketh are made like the oven.

8. — I say that I know not which of these two is worse, or the one who speaketh evil, or the one who stayeth to listen. Knowest thou how he is made who stayeth to listen, and he who speaketh? He is made like the oven. Thou seest at the mouth of the oven the peel, [2] upon which the bread is laid, and this slideth it inside the oven. Such are these men: one is like to the mouth of the oven, and one is like to the peel; that is to say, when thou seest a backbiter who hath the wish to slander, he taketh his stand at the opening of the ear, with his peel, that is, with his tongue, and the ear of the listener standeth open like the mouth of the oven; and as he findeth the mouth of the ear open, he setteth himself to work with his peel of a tongue, and slideth his slanderous speech into the oven.

[1] Elsewhere as well in his sermons the Saint alludes to those who slandered him, they did so perhaps out of jealousy rather than actual enmity. There were more of these among the churchmen than among the laity; they did not spare him, it seems, even in their sermons, and at times attacked his teaching as well.

B.

[2] The wooden shovel used by a baker.

VI. *How a man should bridle his tongue.*

The detractor doth help thee to despise the world.

1. — The detractor doth help thee to despise the world, since by him thou comest to know that there is no truth in the world, for it, with the things which are in it, ever draws us down to damnation. Seest thou not how when thou hast might and dignity it leadeth thee into pride. And when thou hast possessions, it leadeth thee into avarice, and when thou hast fame, it leadeth thee into vainglory, and when thou hast honours, into pride. These are the hooks of the world, which hooks ever draw us downwards, because when thou dost possess the things of this world the world doth grapple thee to itself.

Possessing things that are sweet there is much bitter mingled with these.

2. — Seest thou not when thou hast a sucking-child, and it is already grown, but is accustomed still to take that milk, thou — the mother — to wean it dost put some bitter with the sweet, and sometimes thou dost put there a little wormwood? And when the child would suck, it doth taste the bitter, and when it doth taste this, at once it twisteth its face away from the pap, and crieth: *tpu*, *tpu*, *tpu*, and it doth spit out, because it findeth the bitter; and young as it is so it commenceth to taste the bitter in the world. And as thou hearest of the child so is it with all of us; possessing things which are sweet, there is much bitter mingled with these. Seest thou how many dangers there are in these delights, how many scandals, which it may be said are the bites of the world? And when thou shalt consider this thou wilt say: O thou traitor world, I have faith in thee no longer! for thou hast seen this man great and in state and majesty, who now is despised and made low, and

that man who was rich is now poor, and so there is nothing stable in it.

Thou wilt never find any morsel in this world without a fly.

3. Doh! Think how the world deceives thee in all things. As thou seest it in great things, so it is in small. And see the example hereof, O woman who hast a greedy husband! At one time thy husband, as he is greedy, is desirous of delicate morsels, or at another time he would have a mess of macaroni most richly dressed. What doth he? He goeth to the butcher, and he will seize upon a fine piece of fat veal, and buy it, and then he returneth home and doth say to the woman: Let me have a good mess of macaroni. And she does so. And when she hath prepared this, she doth pour it into the dish, and when this is put upon the board by ill chance it happeneth that the first mouthful this greedy fellow puts into his mouth he doth come upon a fly which hath fallen into it. As he hath found this at the outset, he orders the dish carried away. O-o-o-h! know I well what can befall. How many there are who have attained worldly height and then have fallen into lowliness. How many have found themselves amid very great delights, and for all that they have these things, yet at some time or other in falls the fly; for thou wilt never find belonging to this world any morsel which is clean.

The woman who doth marry and the mother-in-law.

4. — Thou seest, and this often and often, when a woman doth marry she goeth to her husband clothed in fine garments and fairly combed and in elegance and in neatness. Wait! I commend thee to the mother-in-law! She is covered with ornaments, she hath put on trinkets, she hath garlands of pearl acorns on her head, and a ring of gold; she is adorned from head to foot. And she cometh to the house of her husband and she hath been there but a little time when the mother-in-law makes this complaint of her to the husband: Thy wife doth carry herself towards me in such and such a manner; to me she says that she would be the mistress of the house and would do everything according to her own feeling, and least of all at my beckoning. It is a right true proverb which saith: The ass cometh from the mountain and chaseth away the horse out of the stable. There where the wife thought to be assisted and reverenced and loved, she doth commence at once to make discord. O

where is the moment of sunshine that thou didst enjoy? It hath endured but a little while; the fly hath fallen into the dish. I say to thee that there is nothing good in this world. Wishest thou better witness of it forsooth? Is there any woman here among you who is content or any man? Is there any one here who hath had anything good into which the fly hath not fallen? I have never found any man or any woman who had not been bitten thus by the world. These are the bites of the world, and therefore trust it not, for it is traitorous. If a man be good, he will draw close to God rather than to the world, saying: I know that faith is not to be put in the world, for it is full of falsity, since it maketh fair promises and maintaineth them ill.

If Friar Bernardine had money, he would give it all to whosoever should say evil of him.

5. — Lo! I should not wish but for one reason to have money. Pray, what wouldst thou do with it? Wouldst thou spend it in alms, to give damsels in marriage? No. For the needs of the Church? No. For the prisoners? No. O what then wouldst thou do with it? I would give it all to whosoever wished to say evil of me, I mean for my good. Tell me, who, thinkest thou, doth more good to my soul, he who praiseth me, or he who slandereth me? Consider this, that there is as great difference between one and the other as between one who should pull me down from here[1] to the ground and another who should hold me here. But tell me: if thou wert pulled down by one and held up by another, I should cling rather to him who held me up than to him who pulled me or pushed me to the ground. And so I think would you do, each one. In like manner, I say, doth he act who doth slander me. Who doth slander me exalteth me and who doth praise me casteth me down. And since I have travelled hither and thither for a long time I have heard what hath been said of me. When I wished to go from one place to another, in that place whither I am going is said: O-o-oh, what is this? What is this? O-oh, Friar Bernardine is coming! and there is one who says well of it, and there is one who says evil. And if I find one who saith well of me, there are one hundred who say evil. And there is naught that maketh me more fearful for myself

[1] I. e., from the pulpit.

than that one should say well of me, for I know that which I am. And I know that which I am better than he knoweth who doth praise me, for I am always accompanied with myself, and I know my own works. And because I know myself I am ever fearful. Hence the man who blameth me is a greater help to me than he who praiseth me. Thus said Saint Francis: He who blameth me doth me a greater kindness than he who doth praise me; beeause he who doth praise me casteth me down, but he who doth blame me exalteth me.

VII. *Why God hath given us a tongue.*

God hath not given man more than one tongue.

1. — How many tongues hath man, and with how many tongues doth he speak? Never have I heard that any man had more tongues than one. I have heard that in the year fifty there passed by here one who had two heads and likewise two tongues, who went to Rome, and was seen here in Siena; and when he returned from Rome, he returned weeping with one of the heads because the other one was dead. And the living head was expecting to die because they could not live separated one from the other, and therefore it could not long survive. But commonly God hath given only one tongue to man; he hath not done so in respect of the other members, nor even of the other senses. God hath given man two eyes, he hath given him two hands, he hath given him two feet, he hath given him two nostrils to smell with. What doth it signify that he hath not given him more than one tongue? Why, I pray you? It must be for some right excellent reason. And knowest thou why? That thou mayest not speak but with one tongue. He hath not done so with the other senses. He hath given thee two ears and one tongue, so that thou mayest hear more than thou speakest. Likewise he hath given thee two eyes that thou mayest see more than thou speakest. He hath given thee two hands that thou mayest touch more than thou speakest. And again in respect of smell he hath given thee two openings in thy nose that thou mayest smell more than thou speakest; that is to say: he is desirous of more smelling than speaking, of more touching than speaking, of more hearing than speaking, of more seeing than speaking. because he wisheth

that thou shalt do less with thy tongue than with the other senses.

He who speaketh often doth often err.

2. — O thou vain prattler, hearken! A sage giving counsel to mankind saith: If thou speakest, say little and speak seldom and speak low, do not shout; and verily this is a most useful saying! O woman, when thou speakest to thy husband say little, and speak seldom and in a low tone, because who sayeth little can seldom err. Knowest thou the proverb: He who speaketh often, doth often err. And moreover when thou speakest, speak in a low tone: do not speak so that thou seemest a locust.

The Blessed Virgin spoke seven times in all the length of her life.

3. — Woman, wouldst thou please thy husband? Yes. Then speak little, do not chatter as many women do — *chia, chia, chia, chia*, — who never cease in order to rest. O she is a bad neighbour, a chatterer. We have it that the Blessed Virgin spoke seven times in all the length of her life, and not more. I mean not to say that she never said more, but that of all those things which she said we know only seven.

Our tongue is fastened to the heart.

4. — Where is the root of the tongue? Tell me! Hast thou seen the tongue of swine, how it is fastened? So in like manner is ours fastened to the heart. What doth this teach thee? It teacheth thee this: that which thou hast in thy heart thou sayest with thy tongue, which is fastened to it and to it alone.

Its colour is red like fire.

5. — Our tongue maketh clear to us many things which we do not understand. Hast thou considered how it is made? Thou seest that the colour of it is red, like fire. What doth fire signify? Charity. So should the tongue, it should speak with charity. That which it says should be all charity, charity, charity to God, to itself, to its neighbour. In every word that thou sayest, see that thou speakest always with charity. If thou speakest to God, speak with charity; if thou speakest of thyself, speak with charity; and so in speaking to thy neighbour, let this be always with charity; see that within thee there is naught but love, love, love. And since thou seest that love is portrayed all fiery because of its great heat, since the form must correspond to the idea [1], so

[1] One of the frequent Dantesque reminiscences to be found in the sermons: *Perch'a rispondar la materia è sorda* (Par., I. 127) « Ofttimes but ill accords the form to the design of Art ». Trans. by H. W. Cary.

it is right that thou shouldst do in regard of thyself that which thou dost when thou hast a good dish. Thou knowest that when thou hast a very good dish thou dost never make the spoon of sole leather but rather of silver, for it doth seem to demand more than sole leather. In like manner, since thou hast charity see that thou makest the spoon of silver or of gold. Dost thou not understand that the tongue is our spoon, and with it we can ask and have all of which we are in need. And consider also that it is made like a spoon. And therefore speak always with charity, having charity within thyself; and in that which thou sayest have recourse to charity, that is, in charity, for the sake of charity, and with charity.

It is wholly of flesh without bone.

6. — As thou perceivest the tongue is without bone, and is every part flexible, so this showeth thee that thou shouldst use it softly and gently in that which thou sayest — either to God, or for thyself, or of thy neighbour. Be not harsh in thy speech, for thou seest that the tongue in itself is sweetly smooth and soft. A man must have patience, when a thing goeth not indeed very well and must wait a little while. Women, hearken now! When another flies into a passion, and would dash her head against a wall in order to break the wall, what think you she doth? I believe that she would not break the wall, but her head. So I mean to say of him who should try to constrain a man by threats, I say he will never constrain him. What resource is there? I have told thee: speak to him gently. If thou dost speak to him with harshness, thou wilt succeed ill; but if he speak with harshness to thee, do not reply otherwise than gently, and then wait a little, and again speak to him very softly, and thou shalt see that at once he will be soothed.

It is broader than it is thick.

7. — The tongue is broader and longer than it is thick, by which is signified to thee that thou shouldst speak out plainly and at length; be not brief and thick of utterance, that is, speak in such a way that thou mayest be understood. Let not thy speech be obscure; when thou speakest, speak out fully and openly — call bread bread, speak with that tongue which thou hast in thy heart, and speak clearly, so that thou mayest be understood. Do not say first one thing and then its contrary, or again, do not speak as many do who speak so warily that they are not understood. What

sayest thou? « Oh, I mean, — I give, — no, yes. » Oh, oh! speak out plainly and not with that *chi, chi, chi*, plainly, plainly! Hear what Saint Matthew says in the fifth chapter: *Sit autem sermo vester, est, est: non non: quod autem hic abundantius est, a malo est.* But let your speech be yea, yea, no, no: call bread bread.

Your speech is obscure, and he who speaketh obscurely is vicious and walks in vice. On the other hand, he who speaketh with clearness showeth a will to go forward straight in the line with no thought of deceit.

The tongue is placed in the mouth as it were in an oven.

8. — The tongue is placed in the mouth as it were in an oven. Is there a bakeress here? Listen then. It is placed in the mouth like the baker's peel[1] in a hot oven. I wish to make this clear to you so that you shall understand it. All that which we do proceedeth either from God or from the world. So that from those works which thou performest it may be known whether thou belongest to God or to the earth. If thou art one of those who belong to God thou always performest thy works with glowing and ardent charity. If thou art of the world thou wilt never do any glowing deed, because thou hast not charity within thee. And therefore consider thyself of which thou art. Lay up this example in thy mind: If thou art a shoemaker, a man cometh to thee: What price dost thou ask for these little shoes? I wish fifteen soldi for them. If thou givest them for less, thou hast not spoken with charity, and thou hast lied. Again: O shoemaker, make me a pair of good little shoes. He doth reply: I will make thee the best that may be found in Siena. If thou makest them not as thou hast said, thou art not one of those who belong to God. Again, thou desirest to get thy daughter married. From what thou dost say she is the best and most virtuous damsel in Siena. If this be not true, thou hast not spoken in the love of God, nor moreover with charity towards thy neighbour, and thy tongue is not of God, it is rather of hell. Nor again is that tongue of God which doth ask for a thing more than it is worth, or which doth give a bad thing for

[1] See footnote 2, p. 24.

a good, saying: thou wilt not find better merchandise than mine, when sometimes worse could not be found.

It is put in a high place.

9. — Is thy tongue put in a high place? yes. Then do not put it on the ground as the swine doth into every kind of filth. Hast thou seen what the swine doth? The swine when it cometh across the mire, the first thing which it doth it sticketh its snout into it. So doth he who is so lewd a talker that he doth delight in talking of every foulness. O boys, if you shall ever become lewd, woe unto you! And so I say to you all: set not yourselves to say every kind of infamy; say not aught that is filthy, but talk rather of those things which belong to life eternal.

It is put in man's head.

10. — God put the tongue in man's head. Knowest thou why he put it in the head rather than in any other place? Because in the head are all the senses. And these senses surround the tongue placed among them, showing that whatsoever thou speakest, thou shouldst speak with caution, since thou canst do naught which the senses do not perceive, and according as thou speakest, so shalt thou be esteemed.

It is lower than the ears.

11. — God placed the tongue lower than the ears, and he placed one ear on this side, and the other on that side, and they keep the tongue in the middle between them, and keep guard over it one on each side. And therefore when thou speakest thou shouldst consider: from which side do I speak? I shall be overheard if I speak here, for here is the right ear. If I speak there, there is the left ear, which doth hear what I say.

It is placed lower down than the eyes.

12. The tongue is placed under the two eyes, signifying the two kinds of knowledge that a man ought to have; namely, to know how to distinguish the true and the false, and when a thing is not true, never to say it. And the true thing if thou knowest it, thou mayest say it most times without sinning, but not always.

It is also below the nose.

13. The tongue is placed below the nostrils of the nose, so that when thou sayest aught about thy neighbour, first thou touchest thyself, to see whether thou hast the same fault. I know not whether thou hast given heed to this, that when one man wisheth to speak of another, first he toucheth his nose, and then commenceth to speak, proving

first in regard to himself that he is full of the very fault of which he doth accuse his neighbour. And therefore do not point out that thou art good and thy neighbour bad; look first to thyself, and afterwards to thy neighbour. And of such as these speaks Saint Matthew, in the seventh chapter: *Hypocrita, eïce primum trabem de oculo tuo.* Thou hypocrite, who wishest to show that thou art esteemed a good man, cast out first the beam out of thy own eye, and then reprove others. Thou, on the other hand, who art reproved by some one for that which thou hast not done, but which he himself hath done, say to him: Wipe thy nose! [1]

How a man went by night to steal in the Piazza, and then wished to pass as a very honest man.

14. — Hearken! I will tell you what befell once in Siena. At one time they used to sell flour by the barrel and a man wished to steal some here in the *Campo* [2] at night, and he did steal it, and this was the manner of it. He hung a pouch down under him, and he took a little bell with him, and went on all fours; and when people heard the bell they supposed he was a pig, one of St. Antony 's [3]. He opened the vat, and took out flour from it two or three times in the night, and so he came and went, and carried it home. It happened that a thief had been taken and led to justice, and this man who stole the flour every night said: He deserves a thousand hangings. I say that he should work as hard as he may, and should do as I do. And he showed the hardened skin on his hand, which had been made there by his going on all fours. Now to that man might have been said when he spoke thus of the other: Wipe thy nose! In like manner one might speak so to the woman who hath led a most abandoned life, who heareth another spoken of, and accused of something infamous. Then she is very bold to reveal that infamous thing which is charged to the other, and she saith: They say... they say... what do they say? What do they say? Knowest thou what I say to thee? Go, - wipe thy nose!

[1] An expression in popular use to-day, meaning: « Look to yourself. »

[2] See footnote, p. 1.

[3] In those days pigs and fowls were allowed to wander about as they pleased in the piazzas.

VIII. *Of divisions and factional feeling, and of the destruction sent by God.*

Proceed with firmness and justice and scorn anyone who doth oppose thee.

1. — This morning I wish to speak of the discord which there is among a people divided by factions, and therefore I say to each one of you, as Christ said: *ephpheptha*. Open thy eyes and thy ears to hear and to understand those things which thou hast never heard before. I will speak, and thou endeavour to understand that which I shall say; because this which I desire to say is for the salvation of Siena. Until this I have given you sweet syrups in my sermons, now I shall commence to give you such medicines! Of those who belong to the factions, whether Guelf or Ghibelline, I have already spoken in my preaching, in Lombardy and in other places, but never there, nor in any other place was anything of that which I said either thought of or spoken of with distrust, or held in suspicion; but everyone believed rather that I spoke only for the sake of the truth, for there were present both those of one faction and of the other, and each one wished me well because of what I said. Knowest thou why? Because I was ever armed with the teaching of the Doctors of the Church. Knowest thou what? Proceed with firmness and justice, and pay no heed to anyone who doth oppose thee.

And therefore I say, that when I had preached of this matter in Lombardy among other places, my words produced so great fruit that if I had not preached, woe to each and every one! And of what I said no one spoke evil, although there were those present of each faction, and it would seem that it might have been displeasing to one party or the other. Hear what Ambrose saith: *inter duos inimicos nemo*

potest esse fidelis no man between two enemies can be loyal, because either one or the other must suspect him. The reason is this, that the third man who is between them must lean to the side of one or other of the two, whereas I was ever firm and constant. [1]

Those who belong to parties may be compared to wild thistles.

2. — He who hath in his soul a hatred for another person, for all that he doth not put into practice that which he hath in his mind, yet is he not always in mortal sin? Yea, even while he doth sleep, when he hath no thought of sinning and no will to sin, and though the hatred be not put into practice. Knowest thou what this sin is like in the heart of that man? Listen then to an example. Hast thou never seen the wild thistle in winter? Thou knowest where thou lookest about thee in a field in winter, all the plants are dry and without leaves; thou returnest there in the spring, and thou wilt see them all green, thou wilt see the flowers growing on them, thou wilt find them all pleasant, sending forth sweet odours. And so they grow up by little and little. And how hath the thistle grown up with the other green things? It grew from a very tiny thorn, and by little and little the thorn grew and hardened. When it was very young hadst thou put thy foot upon it, thou wouldst not have pricked thyself. Go, put thy foot upon it when it is grown and hardened, see how thou shalt feel it! So I wish to say of a people who cherish hatred and who consent to divisions and factions, who when they love one faction more than another, by little and little the love of one faction increaseth and the hatred of the other, and then they harden in this love and this hatred. And when they are very hard, like the thistle in August, then God sendeth his judges, and thou dost commence to desire the death and the destruction of the contrary faction; and so dost thou hate the contrary faction that not alone hast thou no charity for it, and lovest it not as thyself, but, far otherwise, thou hatest it to the death and art murderous.

The partisans have brought it about that everything, even to the fruits, is Guelf or Ghibelline.

3. — Oh, oh, oh, oh! This thou knowest, it reacheth even to the man who doth pare a peach, or to the cutting open crosswise of garlic: when a man doth pare a peach

[1] That is, not permitting myself to be influenced in favour of one party or of the other.

in a certain way, some stander-by will say: He is Guelf or Ghibelline. And all these are mortal sins. And this matter of Guelf or Ghibelline is an invention of the devil, in order to get your souls. Now do you not see that you have brought it about that every man and every woman, every boy, — even the fruits — are Guelf or Ghibelline? Two things only remain which you have not made Guelf or Ghibelline, which perhaps you would do well to make such. Knowest thou what? Bread and wine; and making these two things partisans, you would never eat them, in order not to have to do with the contrary faction. And I say to you that he who dieth in such a state of partisan feeling, he goeth to the home of the devil; for if thou dost offend God in order to please the devil, judge for thyself — to the house of fire thou goest!

If a man were to be cut to pieces for not belonging to a faction he would be saved, although he had committed thousands of sins.

4. — I believe that if a country became Guelf or Ghibelline and if there were in it among all the rest one man who did not take the part either of one or of the other, and say that the rumour of this was spread abroad, and that one or more should go to him and should say to him: Long live such a faction! I tell you that if this man wish to save himself he cannot do better than to reply: Long live God, long live God! and even if they were to seek to constrain him by force to say: Long live such a faction! and he were not willing to say it, — I tell you that if he were cut to pieces, although he had committed thousands of sins, without other confession I believe that he would be saved — more surely than if he had fulfilled vows or made restitution: I say that he is freed from all guilt. O can this be? Yes. O prove it to me? Willingly. John is my witness: *Maiorem charitatem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.* Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Perceivest thou not then how great charity that man hath shown who, thou seest, wished to give his life for Christ, and who rather than do anything against his will wished rather to die a martyr? He hath shown greater charity than it would have been in him to give all his possessions, more than to receive communion, more than to go to the Holy Sepulchre, or

to Rome, for he cannot have greater charity within himself than when he saith: I belong to Christ.

Every time thou sayest for thy diversion or through fear or in jest that thou art Guelf or Ghibelline, thou goest to the home of the devil.

5. O thou woman there, hast thou given scandal? Yes. Of necessity a millstone will drag thee down to hell if thou dost not now make reparation as thou mayest, for if in jest or in any other way thou hast been occasion of scandal, thou hast acted contrary to the will of God. Hearken! Take this as an example. If pagans or infidels should come and should enter into the city, and there should be one out of a hundred who should say in jest: I have left the faith, or should say it in order to save his life; out of whatsoever motive thou sayest it, or in jest, or in truth, thou goest to the home of the devil if thou diest in such a state. In like manner: if one of you, women, should stand up in the midst of the sermon, and should say: I would sleep to-night with such a man, and if he were a pretty youth, and you beautiful too, so much the worse; I mean that this speech of thine doth serve in itself to make many believe the thing, because people incline rather to believe evil than good, and this alone would suffice to bring thee to damnation for the evil that it produces in others: even while there should perhaps be some one good who would not believe it, yet thou with thy words hast been the occasion of much evil, although thou hadst not thought of doing this thing. So, I would say, thou art like the man who saith: I belong to the Guelfs or to the Ghibellines — even if it were not true; I say, because of the scandal of which thou art occasion to thy neighbour, thou goest to the house of fire. So that if for pastime, or through fear, or in jest, in each and every way thou sinnest mortally because of the injury which thou dost to God.

It is terrible even to consider the evil which is done every day in the world by means of these factions.

6. — Thou perceivest, I say, that whosoever doth hold in act to the faction of the Guelfs, or of the Ghibellines, thou perceivest that such an action springeth from an evil root, and because of its malignity naught but evil only can come of it. Behold an example of this in fact. O women, whence are come the worst homicides, whence the adulteries and fornications, whence the burning of houses, banishings, cutting one another to pieces, robberies? All this wickedness hath grown out merely from the root of these

divisions. And therefore, O women, see that you hold in hatred these two words as if they were devils. Ay me! What hath been done in the two years which are passed?[1] How many evils have proceeded from these factions, how many women have been slaughtered in their own cities, in their own houses, how many have been disembowelled! Likewise, how many children have been killed for revenge upon their fathers. In the same manner babes have been torn from the wombs of their mothers and their bodies trodden underfoot, and little children seized and their heads dashed against the wall; the flesh of an enemy sold at the butcher's shop like any other flesh, — the heart torn from a body and eaten raw, raw! How many have been killed by the sword, and then buried in dung! Some have been roasted and eaten, some hurled down from the tops of towers, others thrown from off bridges into the water; women have been dragged before their fathers or their husbands and violated in their sight, then slaughtered there before them, nor did one in anywise ever show the other pity, save by death.[2] What think you of this, women? More yet! I hear there have been certain women so rabid in their devotion to faction, that they have put spears into the hands of their baby sons, so that these, might by murder avenge these factions. There was one woman so cruel that when a woman of the other party was fleeing, she said to a certain man on her own side: Such and such a one is fleeing, she was set on a horse by one who is carrying her away with him. And he, away after her at once, and said to the one with her: Set down that woman, if thou wishest not to die, and when she was set down, one of these women killed the other. There have been so great horrors because of these factions that this which I have recounted is as it were naught. Ay me, what a terrible thought is this, — only to consider the wicked deeds which are committed to-day in the world!

Christ curses these partisans even when they have themselves painted at his feet.

7. — A certain man there is, who hath caused himself to be painted because he vowed to have himself painted and to have given him a blessing by Christ. But beware,

[1] I. e., during his absence from Siena.

[2] That is, by putting him to death.

rogue, lest — lest at length thou art deceived ! — thou thinkest that he doth bless thee, but instead he curseth thee. And another partisan hath a painting made of Saint Antony and of himself at his feet, and he himself being pushed towards Jesus Christ by Saint Antony. Another hath carved and inscribed in letters of marble when he is dead: Here lieth the body of such a one, *Cuius anima requiescat in pace.* One there was who when he saw this tomb so inscribed, *requiescat in pace,* blotted out that « a » and put an « e » there, and then it read : *requiescat in pece* in pitch, in the house of fire, — but it is they who go there !

When Friar Bernardine preached at Orema against the factions he converted all the people by his words.

8. — When I was preaching in Crema in Lombardy [1], it happened because of the factions and divisions that men to the number of about ninety, with all their families were outside the city ; and they were all named to the Duke of Milan as those to be banished. And in this place there was a very worthy and excellent noble. And when I was preaching on this subject, somewhat covertly (for this is a subject not to be spoken of too openly), in my preaching I spoke in general and not in particular, and I was silent about nothing that should be said. And because it was the time of the vintage I preached in the very early morning, and so early that I had already preached four hours before the break of day. And when I was leaving, one after another, they all came to me saying : What think you that we should do ? And they gave themselves up to me that I might counsel them. Then considering that they were so docile I commenced to say how the matter should go. They said that this rested wholly with the lord of the city. This lord was very familiar with me. I told him what I desired, counselling him to act well. Nevertheless limiting myself to my preaching I left the rest to God and to them. And in my preaching I spoke of the unceasing cries of the innocent before God, against those who have made them suffer punishment for no fault of theirs, asking for vengeance against those who have persecuted them. And so did these words enter into their hearts that they called a council, in which

[1] This passage is found also in another sermon on the same subject, — a sermon of which we have only a few pages because it was interrupted by the rain.

there was such harmony that it was marvellous; and in this it was decided that each of those might return to his home. Then leaving Crema I went to a village which was distant perhaps ten miles, and I talked to one of those exiles, who had left in Crema great possessions of his which were in value worth about forty-thousand florins. And he asked me: How then doth the matter stand? And I said to him: By the grace of God thou mayest return to thy house, because I know well what they intend. He laughed in mockery of that which I said to him, and in a little while from then came a messenger sent from Crema, who told him that he might return at will to his own house. And hearing this, he could not eat, or drink, or sleep, because of the joy that he felt. He came to me, and so great was the gladness he felt that he could not speak. And hearken to a wonderful thing: when he was returning to his house, he found in the Piazza his enemy, who when he saw him ran and fell on his neck and wished to lead him home to supper with him. And another who was in possession of the house where he lived, at once, while they supped, cleared the house of all his possessions, and left there those of this other man; and whosoever had anything of his, sent it to that house of his, — at once, his bedstead, his coffers, his table-cloths, his bowls, his casks, his silver, and in this way it went on so that the very selfsame evening he was led into his house and slept in his own bed in the midst of his own possessions. And I say to you that it seemed as if that man were blessed who could carry him his goods and his chattels. Moreover on the days that followed, those also who had his cattle and his property, his horses, every one came before him: Here are thy oxen, here are thy asses, here are thy sheep; so that almost everything of his was returned to him; and so it was with all the others. And I say that I think I may believe that because of this thing God saved that land from many dangers. And many other places took example from this, and to-day it is one of the best villages of Lombardy. For all that is not a city, it is excellently well populated.

IX. *Of those who begin to do good and then turn back.*

It is best for thee to proceed from virtue to virtue by little and little.

1. — If thou doest a good deed, be it ever so simple, and doest it of love and of charity. this is most pleasing to God; for good, though it may be a little, is indeed very pleasing to him. But he doth wish in truth that thou shouldst proceed from good to better. I once beheld a man, and you too have beheld him, who had within him that which cometh from God, and he would say to himself: When shall we begin to do a little good? And he was ever performing good, and each time he would say in these words: « I would that I might begin to do a little good ». Though he was doing it, yet for all this he did not seem to himself to be doing good. And I saw his soul attain to such an estate, oh, oh, oh! I say to such an estate of perfection that it was a wonderful thing, And therefore I say that if there be one who doth begin of a sudden with very great zeal to do good, and to enter into every great undertaking for the love of Christ, and another who doth begin to do good, and doth proceed by little and little, from good to better — I have greater faith in him who doth proceed by little and little, from good to better, than in him who leapt of a sudden into every great undertaking. As said a holy father, admonishing and teaching, who said: If thou hadst a thousand years to live in the service of God, see always that thou dost go from good to better; and in like manner if thou hadst to live but for a day go thou always from good to better. Wishest thou an example of this? Yes. Hast thou seen such great riches as come of a sudden and as quickly as they come so quickly do they depart? Such riches do not so as have come by little and little, which indeed when they must diminish, diminish by

little and little. And therefore I say it is better that thou shouldst proceed by little and little from virtue to virtue. Take heed, now! Tell me: if a man must go from Siena to Rome, and he should go in a half day, and return in a half day, would this not be well done? Assuredly. But if thou shalt consider him thou wilt see that he will have done as the Corsican horse, which goes so far in one day that then it cannot walk so far even in four days, and finally in the end it is forspent. I say to thee that it is better to go with great slowness and to take heed of everything. And going forward so, thou wilt drive off many dangers which else might overcome thee. O consider the contrary of this! If thou art rich and every day dost take away one coin of thy substance, thou art every month behindhand thirty coins. When thy revenue doth fall in arrearage, this is bad, and thou perceivest it not. Knowest thou also how riches go, which go away suddenly? It goeth as thou seest that the goose doth. A goose flyeth and crieth out, and runneth and goeth: *ca, ca, ca!* and then doth settle itself on the ground, and so it stayeth. And in like manner do many who when the intent to do good comes to them, run rashly without considering aught; and sometimes such a one will be admonished and he mocks the others who admonish him. And because they care not to take thought for that which they might perchance have need of, by little and little they run into grievous peril. Being lukewarm in doing good, thou dost cause the Lord to vomit.

Being lukewarm in doing good, thou dost cause the Lord to vomit.

2. — Thou knowest lukewarm vinegar which is the medicine that doth cause to vomit. Lo! consider water; there are two facts regarding it: first, it is very cold; if thou wouldst heat it, first it riseth to such a degree that it becometh lukewarm. And leaving it still longer on the fire it passeth from the lukewarm stage to heat. So the contrary is true, if it be warm, and thou takest it from the fire, very soon it falls to this degree when it is lukewarm, and when once it is lukewarm it doth never remain so, but doth fall to a lower degree, that is it becometh cold and freezing cold, as it was at first. So doth a soul which is cold, and wisheth to attain to the heat of the love of God. First it goeth from freezing cold to lukewarm, when it beginneth to grow

warm, and not remaining at this degree it doth persevere and attaineth to heat so that it goeth from good to better; but when a man is once warm and then returneth to lukewarmness, O how ill this is! Seest thou not that he goeth backwards? And therefore remain thou in this state; continue to do well, aud heat thyself, So that thou cause not the Lord to vomit; for lukewarmness is most unpleasing to God.

The devil endeavoureth in every way to return to the place whence he hath come out.

3. — When the evil spirit in the swine goeth out from one of them, it goeth about seeking slimy and vile places, but he findeth no place more pleasing to him than that in which he was at first; and knowest thou then what he doeth in order to return there whence he hath come out? He doeth as doth the dog who hath been chased away out of his master's house; he goeth round and round the house, and if he find any tiny crevice he doth endeavour to enter in there. Ofttimes he setteth himself at the opening of the door and with his paws he endeavoureth and endeavoureth to get inside. So doeth the devil: he endeavoureth with all his might in every way which he knoweth or in which he can, to cause thee to fall so that he may enter into thy soul; and if he doth cause thee to fall, he entereth therein and taketh up his abode there, and maketh himself firm in such a way that he is more sure than he was at first; because he doth not enter in alone, but with seven others worse than himself.

He who commits a sin once is prone to commit it again.

4. — That man who hath sinned is more easily lost, because having once committed a certain sin and having confessed it, he is more prone to commit it again, than one who hath never committed such a sin. For an example: If thou hast a piece of wood which is half burned and is then extinguished, this wood taketh fire more easily. If a piece of wood hath never once burned it will not take fire so quickly as that other. So is it with the man who hath never committed sin, but hath abstained from it, while that other, who hath not been able to abstain, falleth the sooner.

That man who is used to perform some evil act becometh inclined to that evil.

5. — That man who is used to perform some evil act becometh inclined to that evil; and when he doth use to commit a sin and maketh this a habit, that is a greasing of the axle, because he goeth from sin to sin, and so endan-

gereth his soul. A Greek Doctor of the Church speaketh of this in like manner. Are there here any virgins? Hearest thou that which I say? If one of these give herself to religion while she is yet a virgin, she hath never so great temptations of the flesh as she who hath once fallen. The reason is that she hath not proved them by experience. And for this reason I say that he who hath once fallen findeth it more difficult to resist temptation when it cometh to him. But if he yield, and let himself be overcome, he falleth and falleth again, and again, more and more often, because he hath not the will to resist, and so, little and little, he groweth weaker so that his estate is indeed bad.

There is a great difference between the Sienese and the Perugians.

6. — I have gone about with my balances weighing Italy. I admonish thee, I admonish thee, that I seem to myself to see an evil omen, and that this punishment might now come sooner than you have ever known such a thing to happen before, if it were not that the Sienese blood is sweet and tractable; but I could wish to see here a steadfast spirit, stable, not changing as you do so of a sudden, for in thiswise you turn in a moment as quickly to evil as to good; I would have you look a little into those things which befall you and not be in so great haste to change,[1] above all when you perceive danger. And for the abandoning of evil, I say you would do well to abandon it presently, and to take it up again slowly. There is as great difference between you and the Perugians as there is between heaven and earth. O women! I preached there a sermon on their vanities, and there I accomplished far more than I did ever accomplish here, for seven loads of their hair and of all those objects which were occasions of vanity in them...[2] Have you never seen sacks of cotton? Like to such as they were those seven sacks, and there was one bale which was of the value of many thousands of florins, and all these

[1] Here he reproves his fellow citizens for a fault of long-standing, fickleness and frivolousness, not unlike that vanity which the divine poet had rebuked in them a century before.

[2] It is evident that some words are missing here, but it is quite clear nevertheless that the Saint succeeded in persuading the women of Perugia to gather together in sacks their trailing gowns, and all the rest of their « vanities », and to burn them, perhaps in a public piazza. B.

vanities of theirs were got rid of. Of that combat they used to hold, which was so direful and so violent a business, now it is put an end to, under very heavy penalties.[1] Also those dances, which they had on certain feast-days, these too have been put an end to.[2] They would blaspheme God so horribly, and the saints, — this too they have done away with, and, know you, that city was more infected than any other by this vice; and whereas it was the most foul, now it is the most pure, by means of perseverance, for most heavy penalties were imposed there. Of gaming it seems there was never anything ; I speak of that which can be seen. I speak not in the same way of you, because you have so deceived me, like a people among whom I had never been. But know you this ? Reflect that I did not come the last time when I was called, but reflect that I am here now ! Home again ![3] Hast thou never seen one man who is angry with another ? Knowest thou how he doth show it ? He showeth it by a grim face — seest thou ? In this way.[4] So God looketh upon us because we have returned unto such disorder and unto customs so dissolute. And he sayeth unto us : *Hab o adversum te.* Thou hast given me cause to grieve, Sienese people, because thou hast abandoned the right way : *quod charitatem tuam primam reliquisti.*

The file of fast and abstinence maketh the soul so bright and shining that it is a wonderful thing.

7. — Is there no smith here, no goldsmith, no blade-smith ? A man doth with his soul, when he performeth penance, as doth the blade-smith. When you pass through the Lane of the Blade-smiths,[5] and turn up there by the Tolomei Palace, you know those men who burnish arms, who

[1] This was a sanguinary joust in which the youths of Perugia engaged on Sundays during the spring, in accordance with a very old custom. It was forbidden, under pain of severe punishment, by the Council of Camarlenghi of the Guilds, on November 10, 1425, after the preaching of Saint Bernardine, who rigorously condemned it.

[2] Dances in church, relic of a pagan custom, lasted through almost the whole of the sixteenth century, towards the close of which they were forbidden by laws. In the Constitution of Cana, a small place in the Sienese Maremma, there is a heading, « Dancing and singing are not allowed in Siena » This constitution was compiled in 1486. It would be easy to find more examples of such regulations, in the constitutions of other places in Italy. B.

[3] See footnote 2, p. 8.

[4] He accompanies these words with a grimace, such as anyone makes who smells or sees something offensive. B.

[5] *Vicolo degli Spadai* near *Piazza Tolomei.*

have a piece of wood, and have also a sword, and with these a little powder; and they put this on the rusty arms, and rub, and rub, and rub, and burnish, and he doth this for so long a time until he maketh it bright and clean and gleaming like a baby girl. In like manner doth the goldsmith when he hath an old cross or a chalice. He burnisheth it with his tool, he maketh it more beautiful than it was before. So doth the smith with his file, and they so exert themselves in workmanship that these things look more beautiful even than when they were new. And so penance doth to our souls; it doth burnish them and maketh them clean and bright. In like manner the file of abstinence and of fasting is the burnishing and the polishing by means of penance, and this same penance, when it is performed with true sorrow, and with willing zeal, maketh the soul so bright and so clear and shining, that it is a wonderful thing. And I believe that if you would do penance for the wrong that you have done, and would return to well-doing you would have more grace and greater the second time than the first. Ah, my brothers and fathers and sons, if you do worse than other people, wherever I have preached and where I go to preach it could with justice be said to me: Oh! thy Sienese, who had so great love for thee, why do not they as thou hast taught them? Why do they not abstain from such vices as thou hast preached against? Likewise I say of you, women, who have shown that you wish me well, — why do you not abstain from so much miserable sin? Which one of you was always here watching me? Oh, I do not see her here, and I do not distinguish her. Truly you did me a very great service by ridding my nose of that fly, when you put her in prison for me. I need no such flies on my nose!

Turn backwards again into the right way which thou hast forsaken.

8. — Perform again the former good works which thou hast forsaken. Wert thou used to hear Mass? Yes. Hast thou forsaken this? Yes. Oh, return unto it! Hast thou forsaken many good works? Oh, return unto them! Hast thou renounced the long doublet? Return unto it! Hast thou forsaken all that was good and honest? Return unto it! Wert thou used to hear vespers? Return unto them. Wert thou used to give alms, and hast thou forsaken this? Return

unto this. Were you ever just in your dealings, and now art thou the contrary? Come, return unto this! Come, return! Was all thy method of living honest? Come, return unto every good act that thou hast forsaken! Thou, O woman, once abandoned the practice of beautifying thy face, and now thou art more vain than at first! Come, return unto this. These women say I granted them to wear slippers two « fingers » high, and this was true; but certain of them say that they understood by this the length of two fingers. Never said I this. I said, and I repeat, the « width of two fingers »! And this, mark you, while yet I am here present among you [1]. Oh, the men will do well and not the women! You are the most blameworthy women in all the world, if you do not as well as they, or even better. And therefore God said by the mouth of John: *Et prima opera fac*; that is, do the first works: *et poenitentiam age* and do penance for the evil that thou hast performed. And if thou wilt do penance for thy evil deeds thou wilt come to return unto the right way of God. Hast thou gone astray? Now, turn back, and enter into the right way. Go to the confessor, and disclose thy sin, and commit it no more. And thou, O confessor, shouldst give him the penance which is opposed to his besetting sin: that is, if he be avaricious, give him as a penance the contrary, order him to give alms; if he be proud, give him as a penance humility; order him to go barefoot, or aught else which leadeth to humility. If he be a vain prattler, order him as penance not to talk; if he be a sluggard, who sleeps too much, order him as penance that he shall rise at least when the Sovana [2] rings. If he be gluttonous, give him abstinence, that he shall not eat too much. Doth he not hear Mass? Make him hear it, and hear also Vespers and Tierce and Nones; — and in this manner thou shouldst correct the sin and vice of the sinner.

The example of the fig-tree.

9. — Hear the example which Saint Luke narrates in the thirteenth chapter. Christ saith that there was a man who had a vineyard, wherein he planted a fig-tree; he went there at the time when it should begin to bear figs, about

[1] Implied: « Imagine what advantage you will take of my words when I am not here. »

[2] See footnote, p. 11.

two years having passed, and went without a basket, and it was one of those that beareth those good large purple figs, thou knowest, from Massa.[1] And when he had arrived at the foot of the tree, he looked up, and he found thereon no figs. He went then the following year, and he went with a hook thinking that there would be some; again he found none. Then thought he within himself: Oh! it hath taken thought only for its growth. He goeth thither another year, the third, and with him he doth carry the hook and the basket, saying within himself: It must have grown, and there must be many figs on it. He arriveth at the fig-tree and findeth not one upon it. Therefore he calleth the labourer and saith to him: This fig-tree is good for naught; hew it down therefore, for it cumbereth the earth. Saith the labourer: Nay, then! Let us allow it to remain this year, — let us not cut it down; I will dig the earth a little about it at the foot, and will lay bare the roots around it, to see if it will do not better; but if it doth not bear fruit this coming year, then will I hew it down.

We may say that the city of Siena is the trunk of the fig-tree.

10 — We may say thus, that the city of Siena is the trunk of the fig-tree. The first year it was in which I was here, that with the word of God I led you to yield fruit to God the most high. The second year, when I went hence, I thought you would do better than you were doing when I was with you; but not alone have you borne no fruit, but you did worse than ever. The third year now is this one, in which I have found you with less disposition than perhaps you have ever had at any time to yield fruit.[2] God hath waited and waited, and you yield no fruit in his praise, but do all things contrary to his will; for which reason he is now filled with anger, and believe me, he has it in his thought to cut down this tree, for that it hath the disposition to be unwilling to yield fruit, since he hath waited now so long. But if he shall be patient and wait

[1] A reminiscence of Saint Bernardine's youth; Massa Marittima was his birthplace.

[2] It is not easy to determine with accuracy in which years Saint Bernardine preached in Siena before 1427, since he journeyed with amazing activity from one end of Italy to the other. It is probable however that here he alludes to his visits to Siena in 1423 and in 1425, and to the sermons he preached in those years, during which it may be said that he preached unceasingly in northern and central Italy. B.

until this coming year, the fourth year, and still thou yieldest not fruit to him, beware, Siena, beware, and again, beware! You may understand in other ways that God hath waited your conversion these four years. He hath provided for you in your need that you may amend yourselves; for the first year he gave thee many corporal blessings, which have protected thee against mortal infirmity and many other adversities. The second year he gave thee many temporal blessings: grain, wine, oil, herds, and of each in great abundance, and flocks. And truly he gave thee these things that thou shouldst yield fruit, but thou hast been meanwhile and still art more hard of heart than thou hast ever been. The third year he gave thee spiritual blessings. How many excellent preachers have you had, most able teachers who have come to this city of yours only for thy salvation! Believe me, God hath waited so long that he will be unwilling to wait for a longer time. If thou await the fourth year and yield not fruit to God, he will say: Down, down, cursed people! Thou hast naught to excuse thee — the earth is laboured; thou art illumined, and hast been; thy vice and thy sin hath been pointed out to thee. Knowest thou what God will do after that time in which he will wait no longer? He will cause the earth to be ploughed and hoed with death; for you will die of pestilence like dogs, and he will send one so great that people will be lacking in so great number that there will not be enough of you to help one another. Nor will this suffice. He will send a war so terrible that they will not be able to till the ground, and they will not gather in the harvesting of grain or wine, then there will follow so great a famine that you will see your own children die of hunger.

X. *Of the anger and pride of sinners.*

If thou be reviled, do not at once fly into a passion.

1. — Are you used, women, to fly into a passion? I see certain of you here that are so lean and spent[1] I believe that at times you do even get one another by the hair. I am looking also to see if there be any here with a black eye, because ofttimes they do even devise quarrels in their sleep. True is it that there is a kind of anger which is not a sin. As when thou dost chastise, and dost grow angry, in training up those of thy household; and at times too thou wilt reply in anger of a sudden, and thou knowest that thou speakest in anger, and thou dost check thyself: this is not a mortal sin. Rather indeed I say to thee further, that by such anger as this thou mayest even merit, for if thou seest one who doth evil, and thou wishest to chastise and admonish him, and of a sudden there cometh to thee a thought which is far from good, and thou dost check thyself and resist it, then thou dost merit. And the greater the struggle and thy resistance, the more thou dost merit. Whence thou hast it in the Psalms: *Irascimini et nolite peccare*. Be ye angry and sin not. See that thou dost resist sin. The teaching of Brother James[2] is this: When any little word is said to you, do not thou fly at once into a passion, because perhaps God hath permitted this to be said to thee, so that thou mayest acquire merit. Would you be convinced of this? Tell me. What merit shouldst thou have if any should

[1] I. e., with rage.
[2] James of the Marches.

hatefully reproach thee, or do thee an injury and thou hadst not patience? None whatsoever. Knowest thou how thou art made? Thou art worse than this wood.[1] Let me prove it; I say to this wood: Thou art an unthankful creature, and wicked. See you that it hath said naught in reply to this, but hath been patient? Thou wilt say: It hath then merited? No, because it hath no soul. But what sayest thou of man? Man hath a soul, and is endowed with an understanding faculty, and hath knowledge, and can reply. And if aught ill be spoken to a man or to a woman, and he hath patience, at once he acquireth merit, and it is a glorious merit. What a blessed thing it is to have patience! O woman who hast a querulous mother-in-law; O mother-in-law who hast a perverse daughter-in-law, if thou hast patience, thou wilt always acquire merit. O thou with a perverse, unreasonable wife! O thou with a perverse husband! thou dost always acquire merit whensoever thou hast patience. But although thou be wroth sometimes, let not thy anger pass beyond the bounds of reason, and if thou wilt always have such patience thou dost ever merit.

Of one who blasphemed God and then repented.

2. — There is however an anger which is called the anger of grace. This anger may be kindled when thou hearest or seest those things which are wicked, and thou canst not endure them, and hast not patience in regard to them, because they are in contempt of God, and against His commandments, and thou because of thy zeal for God hast not patience. I will tell of a thing which befell at Perugia: There was a man who blasphemed God out in the Piazza, and another man, hearing him, struck him a blow on the mouth. At once the man who had received the blow, recognizing that he had said what was wrong, said to the one who had dealt it, give me another, and he turned his other cheek to him. The father hearing that this his son had been struck by that other, hastened there at once, and when he knew the cause of it, said to the one who had struck him the blow that he should give him another one. All this was out of zeal for God. I say that here there is merit, and the one who blasphemed acquired merit also by his patience.

[1] Of the pulpit from which he is preaching.

Of a Florentine blasphemer who was struck by a certain man, and how the governor pardoned the one who had struck him.

3. — Also there was in Florence at the governor's gate a man who wished to go before the governor to demand a favour; he arrived at the gate. The man who was at the gate did not wish to open it: but in the end the other said so much to him that he opened it, cursing God. When he had opened it, this man hearing the blasphemies at once seized the porter, and gave him many blows and kicks and when he had beaten him thus fled. He was sent after, and was at length taken. When the governor asked him: Why didst thou beat my porter? he said: I came to speak to you, because I wished to demand of you a favour, and after that I had besought your porter again and again to open to me, finally he opened to me blaspheming God most shamefully. I not being able to suffer this insult to God, gave him as you could know and see, many a kick and a blow. Then the governor, hearing the cause and the reason for which this man had been moved to treat the other thus, said to him: Thou hast done excellently well; and then he asked him: What favour didst thou wish from me? He replied: I wished such and such a favour. And he said: And I am well satisfied. And he was pardoned for the quarrel he had with the porter, because he did this out of zeal for God. *Zelus domus tuae comedit me.*[1] Such anger when it doth proceed from such a source, is, I say, holy and righteous.

[1] « For the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up ». Psalms LXVIII 10.

XI. *Of the love of one's neighbour.*

Who taketh the side or beareth the device of a faction adoreth the devil.

1. — I wish to show thee that way which the devil hath found to be adored. Before Christ became incarnate and even before the beginning of the world, and even before the world was formed he sought to be adored. In the terrestrial paradise, in order to be adored, he tempted Eve our first mother, in the form of a serpent with the face of a beautiful woman, and said to her: *Eritis sicut Dii scientes bonum et malum*: If you shall eat of this apple, you shall be as Gods knowing good and evil; and so he caused her to fall. Again at many divers times he sought to be adored by other ways and acts and deeds and thoughts; he entered into those idols, which endured until the time of Christ throughout almost all the world. And when Christ came in the flesh, and when His voice and His faith grew and spread, they were cast out by the Apostles from those images wherein they had been adored. And being cast out of them, they took counsel among themselves, and Satan said to the Destroying Demon: Since we have been cast out of those places wherein we used to be adored, let us so act that we may be adored, but in another manner than that which is past. We will bring it about that we shall be adored in so hidden a manner that we shall be left undisturbed, because they will not perceive us. And then they did in this fashion: They made men take up certain devices when they were divided into different factions, and he made them love and honour and reverence these devices so that they were held more dear than any other thing, and they were loved more than God. As every one then can see clear-

ly, whosoever doth hold with a faction or doth bear the device of a faction, can not suffer that any ill be said of this party, and it grieveth him, and he doth remember the offence that hath been done as if it had been done to God; and so in a hidden manner are the devils adored.

Even into the churches and to the tomb do the partisans carry the devil which they have adored.

2. — O priest, in the confessions which have been made to thee by those who are partisans, dost thou see to it that they make this a matter of conscience or that they avoid this sin, or that they do penance for it? I tell thee if they have died in it, it hath gone ill with all of them. I have at times seen over the entrance to their homes and over their gates, arms and devices which they carry ever in their hearts. One hath the great eagle with wings outspread so that we may understand and say: Oh, there is the great devil! Likewise in the churches, whither they carry their arms and devices with their standards; and these are hung up there that they may remain in memory of one who is dead, to show how he hath persisted in such adoration even to death. Sometimes I have seen them even at the head of the crucifix. Then seeing this I have said: O Lord God, Oh, Thou hast the devil above thee! Enough, enough! Consider thou now, what may and can happen to them at their death. What do I mean? Even to the tomb they carry that God whom they have adored.

The painter who paints such symbols goes to the home of the devil.

3. — O painters, who paint such arms and devices as are occasion of sin, knowest thou what is said of thee? *Qui occasionem damni dat, damnum dedisse videtur.* This is a rule of law: When one giveth an occasion of injury it is as if he had done the injury himself, and he is bound to make restitution, if satisfaction is not made for this injury by him who did it. Seest thou not how great injury thou doest? Thousands of creatures are lost by the making of this device, and first the man who has it painted, he who paints it, he who sees it, he who hath it in his house, he who loveth it; all go to the home of the devil. And therefore said Paul in his epistle to the Romans, chap. I, *Propter quod tradidit illos Deus in reprobum sensum:* wherefore God gave them up to shameful affections. He allows them to fall through their desires into shamefulness and filth, and do the contrary of that which they should do.

We remember better that which we see than that which we hear.

4. — I have seen at times cities which do not hold to any factions, of which Venice is one, which never wished to hold to a faction, and they do excellently well. And I have been in many and many where they do hold to them and adore them, as you see is done here; and they are adored by old and young, by young men, by women, by the lowly and by the great; and all those who follow this faction or have followed this, all go to the home of destruction. Wouldst thou know how many sins follow upon it? More yet, for they violate even the church of God, where God alone should be adored. And they have had made there paintings and images with the arms so that these may never depart from the minds of men. From an example you will understand me. Says Bonaventure: *Plus movent visa, quam a udita.* We remember better the things which we see than the things which we hear. Do you wish to understand this? O young men, young men, a man was hanged many years ago in a certain place. I say that though I have said it now, in a very little while they will not remember it. They would not forget it so quickly, if they had seen it, because we remember the thing seen better than the thing heard. So hath the devil brought it to pass that this matter shall not be forgotten; he hath had these symbols made, these images, these banners, which are adored even in the churches, as you see. These things you see every day, — there is no need of many proofs. The end of it I have told thee — all to the home of the devil!

The prayer of Friar Bernardine against those who have held to parties.

5. — O women, have any of thy dear ones died? Wouldst thou know whether they are saved or damned? Yes. Then look. If thou seest their banners, which they have kept for love of a faction, if thou seest them there[1], say: He is of those who belong to the devil. And therefore, my fellow-citizens, and you women, I wish you to hear a prayer which I will make this morning for the souls of my father and of my mother, and of my kinsmen. My Lord Jesus Christ, I ask of thee that if my father or my mother, or any kinsman of mine hath died in the love of these factions of which I speak, I ask of thee that for their

[1] I. e., above their tombs.

souls may not avail either any mass or any prayer that I have ever said in behalf of any one of them. And moreover I pray thee, my God, if any one of them hath held to a faction unto the time of his death, and hath never confessed this, that a thousand devils may have their souls and that for them there may not be redemption. And this prayer is made for their souls.

6. — Hast thou seen how the devils have been able to find a way so that they may be adored? Yes. And therefore I say that he who is a follower of the devices, and he who keeps them, and he who makes them, and even he who sees them, are all in peril of going to the home of the devil. And they will all go there if they cherish them unto death. Dost thou wish to see this more clearly? How many things come to be desired, only because of being seen? For example. If a woman among you, should strip herself naked and were standing up here in the midst of you women, [1] to how many women and men thinkest thou there would come a temptation? I say to thee merely from seeing this, — to many and many! And the more beautiful she was, the greater would be the number of those tempted. So I would say of the arms and the devices. Only by seeing the devices, and the painted standards and pennons, we come to remember the man who is dead; and so to love or to hate him. So the man who did not know him asketh: Who was this man? And so when he hath known, he doth follow the same party. And in this way thou mayest see and understand that in every way there is sin in it.

He who is a follower of the devices, and he who keeps them, and he who makes them, and even he who sees them, are all in peril of going to the home of the devil.

[1] In those days it was the custom at sermons to separate the men from the women, a custom which still exists in our country parishes. As may be seen in the paintings which represent the Saint preaching in the Piazza, they were separated by a curtain half the height of a man, which divided the space before the pulpit into two equal parts. To the right of the preacher were the women, with their linen head-coverings; to his left were the men. B.

XII. *Of governments and how we should govern with justice.*

It is well to speak of those things which it behooveth rulers to do.

1. — We spoke yesterday of the living and harmonious love for one another which there should be among us; and cursed Old Scratch[1] did not wish us to preach to the end as we had commenced; but he shall be well paid for it, and with interest, since all this week, with the help of the blessed Jesus, we will preach in regard of this matter. Well then, we will continue the matter commenced, which I consider to be equally useful and necessary as any matter that I could preach. Because this is a very great error into which you have all fallen, and this defect which you have in you must be cured in that part in which it is found to lie. If one of you had a shoulder that pained and the cure were applied to the heel, it would not serve. Or dost thou wish, if thy head doth ache, that the cure be applied to thy shoulder? I say if thou hast an ache in thy head apply the cure to thy head; if thou hast an ache in thy arm apply it to thy arm. So therefore we should apply the cure to that part wherein lieth the offence. Hearken! This morning the new rulers who govern your city have assumed office,[2] and this doth occur often. It is good to speak of those things which it behooveth them to perform; and in order that each one of them may learn it, so that they may know well how to rule the republic rightly. And it is becoming that I should let my words be few, for I have arrived late,

[1] So in jest he blames the devil for the rain which had prevented his finishing the preceding sermon.

[2] This sermon was preached on the first of September, the day on which the new rulers regularly assumed office. E.

and the error was mine into which I fell through ignorance. I thought I was to preach at a quarter of an hour before Tierce.

To rule well thou must be humble, and so thou shalt be enlightened by God.

2. — Dost thou desire to rule well? Keep thou thy head bowed in humility, and so thou wilt be a hollow reed and wilt listen to all with sweet and yielding magnanimity. Consider thyself and look how fitted thou art to govern others. Knowest thou to govern thyself? How far art thou able to govern? How able art thou to keep thyself from sin? How able art thou to do those things which concern the safety of thy soul? But poorly. Now if thou knowest not how to rule and govern thyself, think with how ill success thou art able to govern others. What shouldst thou do? Be humble, and so thou shalt be enlightened by God. Stand with bowed head, be a hollow reed. Seest thou not for thyself that thou art empty? Yes. And of what? Of not wishing to govern thyself, of not being able to, of not knowing how so to do, without the grace of God. Even if thou rulest well, consider this of God and not of thyself; because of thyself alone thou wouldst do only evil and if thou knowest that thou art empty, God will fill thee full with air, that is with his grace, and the more thou shalt recognize that thou art empty, the more God will fill thee with air and with grace.

Another quality which he who governs should possess, is justice.

3. — Another quality which he who governs should possess is justice. What are kingdoms without justice? Knowest thou what they are? They are very great robbery. And because it is most plain and apparent that cities and provinces decline when justice is not maintained there, therefore is it highly commended, *Diligite iustitiam qui iudicatis terram* Love justice you that are the judges of the earth. Wouldst thou love justice? Then fail not: see that thou dost punish with mercy; do not hinder it, do nothing feignedly. O thou who wouldst practise prudence, and who dost ofttimes use so great malice, do not in thiswise, for thou canst never deceive God, though perchance thou dost deceive men. O thou who dost wish to practise the virtue of humility, who ofttimes with humility doth mingle pride, verily thou wilt certainly not deceive God, although thou wilt deceive thyself. As I speak of this virtue, so thou mayest understand

of all the others. Go on straight in the way, and deceive not. Send everything forward straight to its end, and so thou wilt have the staff of office. What is the staff of office? Knowest thou, the little rod which is put in the hand of the governor and also of many other administrators? That signifieth how he should use justice towards everyone, and that justice should stand upright, that it should neither bend backwards nor forwards, nor to the right, nor to the left.

How the lion held a chapter of all the animals, and how he judged them.

4. — Hearken. A most beautiful example comes to me in respect of this. O woman mark this, listen to this story. The lion once heard that the friars had held a chapter where as sinners they accused themselves of the sins which they had committed, confessing their error. Says the lion: O if the friars hold a general chapter for themselves all before their superior, I who am the superior of all the animals on the earth, and am the lord of them all, should I be less than they? And at once he had a chapter proclaimed of all the animals that they should come before him. And so when they were assembled, he mounted into a seat; and when he was in it, he ordered that they should seat themselves about him. And so seated the lion said: I am unwilling that we should be less than others in such a matter. I desire that we hold a chapter as the friars do, in which chapter I wish that every sin shall be told, and every wrong that is done; because I being the superior wish to know them. I have heard that through your fault many injuries have been performed. I address myself to him whom it toucheth. And therefore I wish that everyone should tell me his sin. Come before me all of you each in turn to accuse yourselves as sinners of that which you have done. It was said to the ass that he should go first: and the ass went forward to the lion, and knelt down and said: Sire, mercy! Saith the lion: What hast thou done, what hast thou done? Tell it. Saith the ass: Sire, I belong to a peasant, and at times he loadeth me with panniers of straw, and taketh me into the city to sell it; it hath sometimes happened that I have taken a mouthful of it on the way thither, without that my master perceived it, and thus have I done ofttimes. Then saith the lion: O thief, thief, traitor,

villain ! knowest thou not what wrong thou hast done ? And when wilt thou be able to make restitution of that which thou hast stolen and eaten. And straightway he ordered that the ass should be seized and that he should be buffetted with many blows, and this was done. After him went the goat before the lion, and in like manner fell down upon her knees asking for mercy. Saith the lion : What hast thou done ? O tell thy sin. The goat saith : My lord, I confess my fault, which is that I have gone at times into the yards of certain women and there have I done damage, and most of all in the yard of a widow, who had a little yard where there were many sweet smelling herbs, parsley, marjoram, thyme, and even some basil ; and many a time have I spoiled certain cabbages and certain little young trees, for I cropped off the tops, which were very tender. And as I did this damage to her, so I have done in many yards, and sometimes I have done so much that I have left nothing green in them. Quoth the lion : Tush ! So I have met with two consciences that differ widely. One hath a conscience so tender that it is too delicate, while the other hath a conscience too easy, as hath that thief of an ass. Dost thou make it a great matter with thy conscience that thou hast eaten these herbs, Eh ! go thy way in peace — go, let it not trouble thee. Tush ! go, and give no thought to it, — go gaily, as I go. Of this sin you need say naught, it is of the nature of goats to do this. Thou hast a good excuse because thou art inclined by thy nature to do so. Go, go, I assoil thee, and think no more of it. After the goat next came the fox, and fell on his knees before the lion : Saith the lion : Now tell thy sins. — what hast thou done ? Said the fox : Sire, I confess my fault, which is that I have killed many hens and eaten them, and at times I have broken into the yard where they lodge, and because I saw that I could not reach them, I have feigned that my tail was a stick and that it was my intent to throw it up at them. And because they believed that it was a stick, they flew to the ground at once in fright, and then I ran among them and as many of them as I could reach I killed ; and I would eat what I could, and the rest I would leave there dead, though at times I have carried away one or more.

Saith the lion: O, thou hast too tender a conscience! Go thy way in peace, go! — all that thou dost is of thy nature. I give thee no penance, and I do not account it a sin in thee. I tell thee even that thou dost valiantly to do as thou hast done, and do not be disturbed except in regard of those which remain.[1] And when the fox had gone, then the wolf came and said: My lord, I have gone at times around the sheepfold, to see in what condition it was. Thou knowest that the net all roundabout it is very, very high, and I have noted well the opening by which I can enter most easily. And when I found the opening, I went for a log of wood, which I think doth weigh as much as a sheep, and I try to go in and out again with this, and this I do so that I may not be overtaken by the dogs. And when I have done this, I enter, as softly as I could with the burden of the log, and straightway I killed more sheep than I had need of, and I came away carrying one. Saith the lion: O here we have another tender conscience! Knowest thou what I say to thee? Do not have such things on thy conscience. Go, and act boldly from this time forward, without any thought of me. And so when the wolf had left, the sheep came there, and she came with hanging head, saying: *be*, *be*. Saith the lion: What hast thou done, Madame Hypocrite? She doth reply: Sire, I have sometimes passed along the roads on the side where oats are sown, and at times have I climbed to the hedge, and seeing those tender green little shoots, I have eaten such delicious mouthfuls of them! I have not plucked them up by the roots, but I have cropped off the tops, that tender part. Then saith the lion: O cursed thief, treacherous thief, so thou hast then done so great evil as this? And thou goest about ever saying: *be*, *be*,[2] — and thou robbest on the way. O cursed thief, what evil thou hast done! Away! Give her a good beating! Give her such a beating that you break her bones, and see that you keep her three days without eating aught.

[1] I. e., those hens.

[2] The first syllable of the Italian word *bene* « good ».

Wolf and wolf devour not each other, but eat the flesh of others.

5. — Oh, there is much salt in this story! Crows never pick out one another's eyes. As for example: when a wicked wolf or a fox doth anything, then doth he cover it, he doth cover it so that it is not seen, as doth the cat. But if it be the wretched sheep, or the goat, that is, the widow or the orphan, or a poor man who doth say or do some trifle, kill him! Kill him! That is what you want! And they are so despoiled that naught remaineth to them. Wolf and wolf devour not one another, but they eat the flesh of others. And therefore I say to you: O thou who governest, do not beat the ass and the sheep for a trifle and commend the wolf and the fox for a grievous crime.

If justice were not done, every land would be full of iniquity.

6. — List now! I wish thee to have an example, of the which I know not whether thou hast ever heard, of what Peter the Comb-Merchant said.[1] He had gone to Pisa to buy iron combs for wool, which was his trade; and during that time in which he was gone, a government had been overthrown [2] at Siena, and certain exiles had set out for Pisa. On the way they met with the blessed Peter as he was returning to Siena. Believing that he had the gift of prophecy they said to him: O Peter, when shall we return to our homes, from which we have been driven out by him who was more powerful than we? The blessed Peter replied,- attend and hearken to these good words, O thou Shearman, [3] and write them down. He spoke these words: When they shall be full of sins deserving of punishment, and when you shall be purged of your sins, you shall return, and they shall be driven out; and then it will happen to you so another time, that when your sins shall have multiplied, and theirs have been washed away, they will

[1] It is this « Peter the Comb-Merchant » to whom Alighieri refers in Canto XIII of his *Purgatory*, a man deservedly enrolled among the « beatified » of Siena because of the integrity of his life. In his business he steadily manifested his uprightness and honesty. He died December 5, 1289. By public ordinance a marble monument was erected to his memory in the Church of *San Francesco* at Siena, as he had belonged to the « Third Order of St. Francis ». A little street of the city still bears his name: it is supposed that here he carried on his business, the selling of combs for wool. B.

[2] That is, there had been one of those changes of government so frequent in the history of Siena.

[3] Here he addresses that *Benedetto*, a shearer of cloth by trade, who day after day wrote down the sermons as they were delivered.

return and drive you out. Hast thou understood this? It is because, if justice were not done, every city would be full of iniquity. I say to thee, hold to justice and punish the wicked. Thou seest this example plainly; if the grass doth not spring up, thou wilt never gather it in at the harvest. So if thou dost take away the wicked from a city, seldom shalt thou find injustice there, for if the thief be taken away, seldom indeed will there be robbery; if the traitor be taken away seldom will there be treachery; and so I say of every vice. And therefore says John: Measure the temple of God and them that adore therein; that is, measure the city, measure the community, measure the subject, measure the people. If there be an evil-doer in the city, O official, correct him and punish him! — either punish him, or restrain him in order that he shall not longer practise his vice. Seest thou not how each one doth in his own house? That because the dung is putrid and fetid, thou puttest it in the out-place. See that if a man be wicked you imprison him, shut him away so that he may not do harm to others. And even then close up his mouth, so that it may not stink, and that he may not make thy room stink: because God permitteth that this should be done; and if thou wilt not do so, he will ruin the rest of the company. It is possible that one evil-doer may ruin not his own house alone, but the whole city, and even all Italy. And therefore punish, punish, O official! see that thou dost not rest until the evil be plucked up by the roots.

XIII. *How we should love our neighbour.*

1. — He who truly loveth, and loveth with his heart, must of necessity live in harmony with all. We do not wish to do as the ass: when thou dost shove away the ass it will push itself towards thee; and if thou dost draw it to thee, it draweth itself backwards. Do not so when thou seest that a certain thing is needful for the good of thy neighbour; see to it that thou dost always help him. Did not God wish the generation of humanity to have its beginning in a mystery? This was merely because of the harmony that should exist among us.

See to it that thou dost always help thy neighbour.

2. — In the beginning thou seest that God created Adam alone; he did not create Adam and Eve together, at the same time, but Adam first, and then Eve. He did not thus in respect of the beasts and the animals, for these he created two and two. And again thou seest whence he formed woman: he created her not from the head of man, nor yet from his feet; but he created her from the middle, and this too is a mystery, to signify that woman is not the head of man. O things go ill indeed when she doth overrule man! See moreover that he wished not to draw her from man's feet; to signify that man must not degrade his wife, he should hold her as a woman and not as a slave. And for this reason, I say, he did draw her forth and form her from the middle in order that they should be equal one unto the other, yet that she should still be drawn forth from Adam. Not thus did he do in respect of the beasts. He made two goats, two sheep, two oxen, two asses; that is, he made one male and the other female: and so all the beasts, two and two. In like manner he made the birds,

Animals take their beginning from plurality, while man taketh it from one alone.

two, the male and the female. Again thou knowest that thus they were preserved in the ark in the time of the flood, one male and one female; although there were there more of men, since he wished to preserve upon the earth those souls which were good. Mark that which I say; I say that the beasts take their beginning from plurality, while man taketh it from one alone. And so I say this clearly showeth and proveth man to be a beast whensoever he doth become estranged from pure love. His love must be united in one, not divided in many and in divers ways.

Although so many divers things exist together in nature, yet they war not one against another.

3. — All the things that God hath made in this world, are his books. He made the water, the air, the fire, and the earth, and these four elements are by their nature far distant one from another; for water is in opposition with fire, the air with the earth, and the earth with the water, and yet God hath disposed and placed them in such a way that each one doth abide as he hath established. Thou seest the water in winter make of itself ice above the earth; the sun with its heat doth melt the ice, and maketh it to spread out as water, and thou seest how it doth distil beneath the earth, and from this the gourds grow up; and this doth bring forth the vines and the fruits of the trees: for although they be contrary yet do they come together in marital correspondency to make the earth bear fruit. In like manner man hath this fourfold nature, humid, dry, hot, and cold. And yet these all are within the body and keep man alive. Again you see in man divers things: there is in him flesh, bones, nerves, blood; and while so many divers things are here together, yet is there so great concurrence among them, that they never war in any manner against the tendency given them by nature. And as I say of animate nature, so do I say of inanimate nature.

What a merciful deed it is to aid prisoners.

4. — I know not how you are used to do, you who are here; well I know what was done in Rome, when there was collected so much money that by it prisoners were liberated from thirty prisons, or high as many. O what a merciful thing was that! Ay me! What have I heard of you? O thou who dost hold a prisoner for a debt of three florins, and there dost let him pine away, ay me! what then dost thou wish from him if he be not able to pay thee?

Dost thou wish his flesh? Alas! have pity on him for the love of God. If thou seest that he is unable to pay, make him not so to waste away and die in this manner. O women, for the love of God I pray you take thought at least for some beds. Oh! this is called the city of mercy. For the love of the Virgin Mary, from whom the city hath this title, ah, provide for these! and if you be unable to aid them, at least have compassion on them in your hearts.

It would be a merciful thing if the debtors might come to the preaching.

5. — O thou who hast a debt of five soldi, and dost keep the debtor in prison, and maketh him to waste away there, I hold that thou art not merciful. I asked of thee on the day before yesterday a boon, that at least those debtors who are unable to pay, those I would say who are here shut up, or who are fled from Siena[1] because they can not remain here in safety, that these might come to the preaching for so long as I am here.[2] And it doth seem to me to surpass belief that I should have a worse return from you than I have had in those other places where I have preached. Oh, I am the Lord of the World![3] Shall not all be permitted to come there where is the Lord of the World? Ah! let them come hither to me in this little while that I am with you!

Man is wors e than the birds.

6. — Thou shouldst take example from the beasts, from the birds; if thou hast not intelligence of thyself to learn. O boys, boys, when you take captive little swallows, what then do the mother birds? All the mother swallows unite together, and do in every way endeavour to aid the little pretty birds. Not so doth man: not alone doth he not endeavour to aid his brother, but he hath not even compassion on him. Worse than the birds is man! Oh, in what confusion will the cruel man find himself, who hath not compassion on him who is his fellow! For thou seest that the beast is more merciful than thou art. So mayest thou see of the swine which are merciful one towards another, that when one doth squeal all the others run to aid him,

[1] I. e., those who are imprisoned for debt or those who have fled from Siena because of their debts.

[2] I. e., while I am preaching in Siena.

[3] That is, when I preach the Gospel I represent the Lord of the World; it is God who speaks through me.

if it be possible. Do I speak to you obscurely, so that you understand me not?

Saint Francis was glad of the good that came to others as if it were his own.

7. — Let it never be out of thy mind that we are all from one seed begotten by one father. We are all brothers, and therefore every good thing that thou seest of thy neighbour, all wisdom, all beauty, every gift of nature, all good renown, every honour, every benefit which he hath, see that thou art glad of it. Hence Paul teaching us this maxim saith: *Gaudete cum gaudentibus* Rejoice with them that rejoice. If thou see one receive something good, look to it that thou dost rejoice thereat together with him, and see that thou beest armed against the accursed sin of envy. It were well that the envious man should have more eyes than the peacock, and that he should see all the benefits that every creature doth possess in order that he might burst anon wholly. He should rejoice that his fellow hath aught good, and by how much greater the good, by so much more should he rejoice. And he hath envy to him, and is sorrowful thereat. O woman, hast thou envy to thy finger which hath a ring? Or, hath the finger which hath no ring envy to that which hath? Take example from Saint Francis, who rejoiced in the good which the King of France had, and was so glad of it that he said: I am as glad of it as if it were mine, giving then these reasons for it: If he be at war, I am not; if he be in danger of poisoning, I am not; if he must guard his lands, I must not; if he have to spend money, and to pay men at arms, I need not take thought for this. In respect of all this the gain is mine, and he is in danger of losing. He hath tribulations and cares in the maintenance of his high estate, and I have somewhat to eat without any peril whatsoever. And so he rejoiced in the good fortune of others as if it were his own.

If Friar Bernardine had come to Siena as Bishop, he would have had half of his mouth closed up.

8. — When thou hearest of dissension among others, see at least that thou dost grieve thereat, and that thou dost endeavour to bring about peace there, as far as in you lies. What think you hath been the occasion of my coming? The occasion was this, because I heard that there was very great dissension among you, and it was said to be even greater than it is. And I said within myself: O if I do good to others, am I not bound most of all to my fellow-citizens?

Verily in truth I am. And I say unto you that because of the love I bear to all of you, every word I heard from you wherein goodness was wanting was to me a bombarde. And because the faith I have in you is so great that I think there is no religious in whom you believe more than you do in me, for this reason I grieved the more over it. And were it not for the matter of the Bishopric I should have come here straightway, as soon as Easter was passed; but I turned first to consider myself, before any other. *In monte salvum te fac* First of all save thyself. I withheld myself out of fear lest I might be inveigled; for were I come so soon, I could not have done as I now do, after my own will. Were I come as you wished me to come here, as your Bishop, half of my mouth would have been closed up. See,-thus: in this condition should I have been, [1] so that I should in no way have been able to speak, but with a close mouth. And I wished to come in the manner in which I am come, in order to be able to speak out freely; for so shall I be able to say that which I wish to say, and to speak of everything rather after my own habit, and boldly to admonish you of your sins.

[1] He adds to the vividness of his words by tightly closing his mouth, in order to illustrate how the episcopal dignity would have interfered with his liberty of speech. B.

XIV. *How the husband should love his wife, and in like manner the wife her husband.*

Every man should seek after goodness in a woman and not after a dowry.

1. Consider those who take to themselves a wife that she may bring them a fair dowry: when it hath been promised, and then the dowry cometh not, what feeling of friendliness think you can there be? And even if the dowry come, yet is the friendliness such as springeth not from a just cause, since thou hast not had regard to that which thou shouldst have regarded; for oftimes money doth cause the doing of much which afterwards many do repent of. And therefore I say to you, woman, be unwilling to take to thyself as husband one who hath it in his thought to take thy money and not thee. But wish rather to take him who wisheth first before all else to take thee, and then afterwards thy money with thee: for if he love rather thy money, it is not well. *Laedetur quasi vinea, in primo flore botrus ejus.* Knowest thou that which I would say? As the grape, thou knowest, in blossom; then next the shoot growing up doth become a tendril; for many times it doth befall that the woman is endowed with much dowry, and for this great dowry are made garments of very great price, and then they lie there unused, and no manner of good is had of them. O how wrong a fashion is this! Hearken! I am neither Pope, nor Emperor, although to myself[1] I seem so. This I say because if it lay in my might I would introduce as a practice, that all the women should go clothed after one fashion, as the Roman women, who all go

[1] I. e., because I am content to be as I am.

clad in cloth of linen. To their praise they wear on their backs and on their heads, all of them, white cloth of linen, even the wives of famous princes, as well as the other women. And when they go into a house of death, they go all clad in mourning gowns; and truly this manner of dress doth please me mightily. When they go to the « pardons »[1] they go simply clad; they do not go trailing their garments after them, nor do they spoil these with cutting them in designs and patterns, and with so great waste of much cloth.

2. — See now how it goeth when a woman marries, and the man taketh her in order that he may have her possessions. Hast thou got her possessions without goodness or virtue besides? Yes. When she doth arrive at her husband's house, the first thing that is said to her, is this: Thou art not welcome here! And if it be not said to her in words, it is said to her in deeds; for in faith he took thought only of the dowry, and of having this. But if another woman should have more than this one, if she should have both dowry and beauty as well, oh! then she is indeed a shrew.[2] Within a very little while there will be no true friendliness between them, for when she shall grow a little yellow then he will not care so much for her. If one shall possess goods, and shall have beauty and right feeling, there will be greater friendliness: if you add thereunto that she is rich, wise, of good customs, true; if she will bear children, will carry herself kindly towards her father-in-law, will fear God, will treat all of the household loyingly, will give alms and offer prayers to the honour of God, and will make herself beloved by all those who shall have to do with her; if she shall be of such condition, not they alone but the very stones will say well of her. Oh! To such as these will true love be shown. It is not the fair dowry alone which maketh a man to care for his wife, it is not even a fair dowry nor beauty, but only goodness bringeth it about that she is greatly loved. And therefore, O women, who have daughters to marry, see to it that you let your daughters have

It is not the fair dowry alone which maketh him care for his wife, nor beauty, but only goodness bringeth it about that she is greatly loved.

[1] That is, when they go to church on those occasions when pardon may be obtained through a plenary indulgence.

[2] Because of her greater pretentiousness.

the dowry of virtue, if you wish that they be loved by their husbands.

How a beautiful, tall maiden rejected a youth who was like a little wren, small and thin and insignificant.

3. — There be many who wish to have a wife, and can not find her; knowest thou why? Because he saith: I wish a woman who is wholly wise and good, and thou art crazed! This goeth not well; a crazed man accords well with a crazed woman. How do you wish this woman to be? I wish her tall, and thou art undergrown, a little wren; this goeth not well. There is a country where the women are married by measure. And it happened once that one of those who wished a wife, wished to see her; and he was brought to see her by the brothers of the maiden; and she was shown to him barefoot, with nothing on her head, and when the measure of this maiden was made she was the tallest among them all, and he was a little tiny fellow. Finally they said to him: Well, then, doth she please thee? And he said: Oh, in truth she pleaseth me well! But the maiden seeing him so insignificant as he was, said: And thou pleasest me not. Aha! how well he deserved that!

As thou dost wish thy wife to be, be thou such thyself.

4. — Of what kind wishest thou this wife to be? I wish her virtuous, and thou art dishonest. Again, this goeth not well. Further, of what kind dost thou wish her to be? I wish her temperate, — and thou dost never leave the tavern. I do not wish her greedy, — and thou always with thy dainty morsel of fried liver! This is not well. How dost thou wish her to be? I wish her busied about things, — and thou art a waster of the whole day. How dost thou wish her to be? I wish her mild, — and thou wouldst scold at a straw that falleth athwart thy feet. How dost thou wish her to be? I wish her obedient, — and thou obeyest never, neither father, nor mother, nor any one else: thou dost not deserve her. How dost thou wish her to be? I wish her not to play the part of the cock,[1] — and thou art no hen.[2] How dost thou wish her to be? I wish her good, beautiful, wise, accustomed to the practice of every virtue. Thus I reply to thee, that if thou wishest her to be of such condition, thou must needs be so thyself; that like as thou goest in search of a virtuous wife, good

[1] I. e., strutting about in pride, imperious and dictatorial.
[2] I. e., submissive, humble.

and beautiful, so think that she doth wish thee to be, wise discreet, good, and endowed with every virtue.

As the sun is an ornament in the heavens, in like manner is the wise and prudent woman an ornament in a house.

5. — Wouldst thou know how to answer and tell me what is the most beautiful and most useful thing in a house? Is it to have very many servants, obedient and courteous? It is not this. Would it be to have such adornments as are goblets and plates of silver, or cloth, or silks, or velvets? It is not this. Is it to have obedient children, pleasing and endowed with good understanding? It is not this. What then is it? Knowest thou what it is? It is to have a beautiful, tall wife, who is wise, virtuous, temperate, and such as to bear children. Truly there is no ornament in a house more beautiful than this nor can there be any such. Knowest thou how well the woman doth become the house? As the sun, which illuminates all the earth, for above the earth there is seen naught more beautiful than the sun.

The woman is cleaner and more precious in respect of her flesh than the man.

6. — I will hold with the women, and I say that the woman is cleaner and more precious in respect of her flesh than the man is; and I say that whosoever hold to a contrary opinion he doth lie in his throat; and I bring it to the proof. Would you understand this? But tell me then, was not man created by God from slime? Verily. O women, let us draw our reasoning from this! And woman was made of flesh and bone, so that she was made from a more precious thing than thou. What! thou mayest have the proof of it daily, how the woman is cleaner and more free from dirt than thou. Of a man and a woman let each one wash as well as they know how and are able to do, and then when that they are washed, let each one take clean water and let them rinse themselves; and then look at the rinsings of one and of that other, and thou wilt perceive that those of the man are far more foul than those of the woman. Wherefore? Wash a little slime and look at the water that floweth off, and thou shalt see how dirty it will be. Wash a rib with the flesh upon it, and it[1] will be a little dirty, but yet it will not be foul like that from the slime. This further is a better proof. If thou wash an unbaked brick, thou wilt have always dirty water from it, whereas if thou

[1] I. e., the water.

wash a bone, thou wilt not so. So it is in respect of the man and the woman, for the man is of slime and the woman is of flesh and blood by their nature in the beginning. And let the proof of this be that the man, who is of slime, is more quiet than the woman, who is of bone, — bones do ever rattle.

That it is true that woman was made from bone and not from slime may be proved by the noise that she doth make continually.

7. — O women, women, how much in fault you are that in the morning while I am saying Mass, you make so great a noise, that in truth I seem to hear a whole mountain of bones, so do you cry out! One of you saith: Jane! Another calleth: Katherine! Another: Frances! Oh, this is great devotion forsooth, which you show in hearing holy Mass! For me, it seemeth to me a great confusion with no devotion nor reverence therein. Do you not call to mind that here[1] is celebrated the glorious body of Christ, the Son of God, for your salvation? that you should carry yourselves in such a manner that no one should utter even a «sh»! Here cometh My Lady Lazy Bones, and would seat herself in front of My Lady Ready Betimes! Do so no more. Who first arriveth, may first grind[2]. In order as you arrive, take your seats, and let not any enter in front of you.

There is no city wherein evils have so multiplied as in Siena.

8. — Among other vanities which I have seen, I have found none so great as here in Siena: because you, women, seem to me to be so tall as to overtop other women when you are set up on stilts[3] with garments trailing behind you; which to my amazement bear witness to so great shamelessness in you, that I fear lest through this alone you will bring terrible destruction upon this city. And saith she: The purchase is made, what then must we do? The deed being done we can not now turn back. Thou sayest truly. But will you answer me this? If a man standing upon the tower leap forth from it, and the leap being made, if he shall then perceive and comprehend how ill he hath done, he can not turn back, but falleth perforce with a shock to the earth. So do I believe it will befall you because of the fashion of your garments, you who say: What remedy is there, the

[1] That is, in the chapel of the *Campo*, where the Saint used to celebrate Mass every morning before preaching.

[2] I. e., at the mill.

[3] A reference to the high heels of the women's slippers.

deed being done? This only do I know full well, that I am awaiting a great shock, for when I consider that vanities are so multiplied here, and that those things which are of the spirit are so lacking, I see not what good can come of it. Here are no more to be found men of spiritual mind as there were used to be, such as were once seen here; nor yet such women; for there were many both in the city and in the confines outside the walls as well, which were once quite filled with them. I know not the meaning of this: yet I see that you till your fields [1], which were the rightful possessions of the church; - how matters have gone in regard of this you know it far better than do I. Likewise when I consider the churches, the hospitals, which were used to be provided with all that was requisite [2], I see here as well that the city is at fault; in that hospital there is found not a bed which can harbour the pilgrims, - one is weak in this part, another hath many parts that are weak. I see that evils multiply and that good is wanting. I see that the prisoners have no aid from those who could help them, I see the widows and orphans abandoned, and every act of mercy diminished. On the other hand I see money lavished in pomp and vanity. Further, I saw before that your Companies [3] were most deserving of praise. Now I know not of what condition they are. Also I remember well how many most worthy religious there were of the Observance who are no more to be seen here. All have vanished. In truth of those that I saw then in these Companies, their observance of piety was true devotion. We must speak in praise of that which is good. I tell you that at Milan there are two monasteries of the Observance and the whole number of women therein is forty, living under that Rule which holy Francis gave to Saint Clare; women of very great piety and devotion. Also at Crema there are many of the Third Order of Saint Francis; and how great yield there hath been therefrom! Three months ago, or less than this

[1] For the present there is as yet no way to hinder the cultivation of the soil.

[2] Care for in respect to all that was requisite, including of course religious services, etc.

[3] Religious societies of the laity, which he had reformed and had inspired anew with zeal.

it is I do remember that there were heard beatings of the discipline by about five - hundred, for all beat themselves with chains of iron, and the blood flowed, and it was a pious thing to see. Not here doth it appear that such things are done, yet when I went hence I believed that you were all saints. Now I say not thus. You have so destroyed my faith in you as no other people have ever destroyed it, of those with whom I have had to do. Now at Perugia there are well nigh thirty young men, given over to so holy a life that it is a marvellous thing, — all of them having put on our habit. Nor do I speak of the rest, of whom there are many who receive communion every week, now ten, now twenty, now thirty, or nigh that number ; nor do I speak of the confessions, and this is a pious thing to see. And therefore I say to you, O men, help your wives. And you, O women, help your husbands that they may not endanger their souls, and lay not away your goods in coffers, whereby thou seest well that they make thee to sin, thee and likewise thy husband, who doth content thee with that which thou dost ask of him. For thou by so doing and he likewise, do help one another to endanger your souls.

There are many who consider not how noble a thing is a boy or a girl.

9. — By the fruit of the woman shalt thou know if she be good ; when a woman is good, she doth bear children, which are the most noble fruit that can be brought forth in this world, when they are good. For thou knowest that God planted the tree, and that the fruit thereof is the noblest thing that there can be. Oh, when thou seest a male child, thou hast never seen fairer fruit ! This tree, as thou knowest was planted in so precious a place, in the terrestrial paradise, and was made by the hands of God himself. Many are there who consider not of how great value is a boy or a girl, and many having them prize them not at all, and when he doth see that they do something which is childish, he knoweth not how to bear with them, so lacking is he in discretion. For such there are who know better how to bear with a hen, who doth lay every day a fresh egg, than to bear with his own wife ; and sometimes the hen will break a water jar on him or a glass, and he will not beat it, simply because he can not endure that he should lose its fruit, that egg. O ye many madmen, who do merit chains,

you who can not bear a word from your wife, who yields fruit so fair, for when she saith one more word than seemeth good to him, straightway doth he seize upon a stick and set himself to beat her; — yet the hen, which doth cackle all day, and doth never cease, with her thou has patience, that thou mayest have the little egg, — which sometimes the hen even breaketh for thee, and doth more trespass than she doth repay, and yet thou hast patience because of the egg! Many unamiable fellows seeing that the woman is not so quick nor so clean and dainty as they would wish, straightway buffet her, and the hen ofttimes even befouls the table for thee, yet thou hast patience. Oh, wherefore dost thou not regard that which thou oughtest to do? Seest thou not likewise the hog, which doth squeal and grunt, and forever doth befoul the house for thee; and thou dost suffer this until the time cometh wherein thou shalt slaughter it? Such patience thou hast only in order that thou mayest have to eat that fruit, the meat. Consider, thou naughty rogue, consider the noble fruit of the woman, - be patient, not for every trifle is it fitting that thou shouldst beat her, no!

The woman endureth toil in caring for the entire household.

10. — When the woman seeth aught to be done there doth she stand in readiness. If she be with child she suffereth pain in her condition, she suffereth in bringing forth her children; she endureth toil in looking well to them, in teaching and training them, and doth tire herself as well in looking to the comfort of her husband when he is in any need whatsoever of care, or in sickness. And thou therefore since thou dost see in how many ways she doth suffer and endure much, so, O husband, when thy wife hath need of any care, see that thou aid her to bear the burden. If she be with child or in the pangs of childbirth, help her in that which thou canst, because that child is thine. Let each one aid her in that which he can. Consider in thy mind in regard of her that she doth suffer pain in giving birth to her child, that she doth tire herself in nurturing it, in teaching and training it, in washing and cleaning by day and by night. All this labour seest thou belongeth to the woman alone, and the man goeth forth care-free with a song on his lips. There was once the wife of a gentleman

who said to me: Meseemeth that the good God doth according to his will, and he doth well, say I; but the woman alone and by herself hath the burden of the child in many ways, she it is who must carry it, she who must bear it, she who must take care for it, and at times she doth suffer great pain therein. Would that God had given some part of this burden to man! At least in child bearing! And I hearing these arguments, replied to her: Meseemeth that thy cause is just.

Never mayest thou live in comfort unless a wise wife doth look to thy house.

11. — Saith this fellow here: Why must I take a wife? I know no cares; I am not wakened by children while I sleep at night; I need not to spend so much as I should then have to. Why should I wish this burden? If I fall sick I shall be cared for by the servants of my household, far better than I should be tended by her. But I say to thee contrariwise, that a wife will tend her husband better than anyone else in the whole world. And as with her husband, so with her house, she will look to it better than any other person in whatsoever there be need of. Hearken to Solomon: *Qui possedit bonam uxorem, bonum inchoabit* He that hath found a good wife hath found a good thing. Saith that fellow: further, I have no wish for a wife, but I will take a mistress, so shall my comfort at the least be looked to. Mine and the care of my house and of my possessions. Again I tell thee, that a woman of that condition will look to naught else than to hoarding for herself; she will be diligent ever in stealing, and if forsooth she see that aught in the house goeth not well she careth not how such things go, for she saith within herself: what need is there that I should tire myself out and attend with so great care to all things here? For when I shall grow old, he will take pleasure no more in the sight of me. And so for this reason she permitteth that to spoil which the wife would never let spoil. Whence it is said: *Qui nutrit scortum, perdit substantiam* he who cherisheth the mistress and the strumpet scattereth his substance, that is, his possessions. She doth ask this and that, and the crazy madman giveth her that which she asketh, and so the matter goeth ill indeed. And therefore I say to thee, better is it to take a wife since thou canst not, or knowest not how to resist the

impulses of the flesh; and when thou hast her, see that thou dost live as ought every true Christian to live. Knowest thou who doth know that what I say is true? He who hath her, a good and careful mistress of the house, who looketh well to the house in all ways. She watcheth over the granary, she keepeth it clean, so that nothing filthy may get in there. She doth care for the jars of oil, deliberating in her mind: this one must be thrown out, this other one must be preserved. She taketh care of it and doth look to it that naught may fall into it, and that no dog or other beast may nose it. She payeth heed, and in every way that she can looketh to them, that they leak not. She taketh care for the salted meat, both in salting it and next after that in preserving it. She keepeth it free from dust and giveth to it her thought and care: this must be sold, this other must be kept. She maketh her household to spin, and then causeth them to make cloth of fine linen. She doth sell the bran, and with that money doth buy linen. She taketh thought for the casks of wine — if she doth find the hoops thereof broken or if they leak in any part. She taketh thought for all that is in the house. Not so doth the mistress, thou knowest; for in all that she findeth to do she doth steal something. She taketh no thought how things go, for, since the goods are not hers, she doth labour unwillingly therefor, and she bestoweth but little care upon them. And if there be one who hath neither wife nor any one who looks to it, in what condition, thinkest thou, is his house? Oh, this will I tell you, because I know it well! If he be rich and if he have much grain, the sparrows eat it for him, and the mice. He keepeth it not heaped in order, but will so scatter it about that all the house is dirty with it. If he have oil, because he looketh not well to it, it leaketh away; when the jars break, and some of it leaks out, he puts a little earth over this, and there is an end of it. And the wine? Finally he reacheth the cask, and doth drain out the wine, and thinketh no more of it: sometimes the cask will burst open behind and the wine leaks out. Likewise a hoop or two will break, and he pays no heed, in

[1] The jars.

like manner, some of the wine turneth to vinegar and some doth become musty. Abed knowest thou in what condition he sleepeth? He sleepeth in a ditch, [1] and as he hath put the sheet on the bed, so it doth stay, until that it doth tear apart from age. In like manner, in that room where he is used to eat, there on the ground lie the rinds of melons, bones, refuse leaves of lettuce, all left there upon the ground without being ever swept up. Knowest thou the state of the table? It is such that from that part of it upon which is laid the cloth this is never taken up until it is mouldy. The platters he washeth as little as ever he can; and the dog licketh them and cleanseth them, the earthen pots are all greasy, go, look in what condition they are! Knowest thou how he doth live? Like a beast. I say to thee that it can never go well with him who liveth in such a manner. Women, bow your heads. [2] The woman it is who knoweth how to take care for the house, — to all else she payeth little heed, — and never can it go well with thee if thou livest as thou dost.

[1] I. e, the indentation made in that part of the bed where he lies; the bed is never shaken up and smoothed.

[2] Having been praised they must be on their guard against the sin of pride.

XV. *Here is treated also the well-ordered love that ought to exist between man and wife.*

1. — The time methinks doth not suffice for that which should be said. We will speak briefly and will speak of that which is spoken always unwillingly in sermons. O how evil a thing it is that we never speak or preach of those things in regard of which a man ought to be illumined throughout his life! I wish to say that which you are bound to hear. I ought to speak with modesty and you should hear me with faithful attention. I am bound to do this, as I have said to you, and moreover my conscience doth dictate to me, and further reason doth represent to me, that I ought to rebuke the sin in which I see a people entangled for who doth take upon himself to perform such an office[1], he must perform it in that manner according to which it is ordained and prescribed that it should be done. Such an office is performed in this manner: whosoever doth perform it must rebuke the hearer in respect of all those things because of which he doth consider him to be involved in sin. And such is in my thought to say to you this morning; and this sermon is called the sermon which doth lay bare cankers; because thou hast never heard of so many cankers laid bare, as thou shalt hear of to-day and to-morrow. Hearken! Wouldst thou have proof that I am bound to admonish thee of thy sin? Now think upon this. Am I not bound in like manner as other religious to drag your souls from the claws of the demon, precisely so far as doth lie within my power? Nay, tell me this: if I should see over

The preacher has to give an account to God of all the evil he might have hindered, if he hath not hindered it with his words.

[1] The office of the preacher.

there a man who wished to poison that fountain[1], and if I had it within my power to hinder him by my words, so that he should not poison it, am I not bound to hinder him? And even if it were poisoned, am I not bound to tell you this in order that you may not drink of it, so that you be not poisoned? Yea, truly. So likewise, I do not wish that it should depend from me that you are not admonished, and therefore wait all to listen and hear that which it is needful you should hear. And thou woman there, do not fall asleep[2], but listen to hear of those sins which thou hast committed, and which thou hast never confessed; for I have pondered thy sins, and have determined to point them out to thee, in order that thou mayest be on thy guard against them. For I must render an account to God of all that evil which I might have hindered, if I have not hindered it by my words. And likewise of all that good which I might have caused to be done, if I have not taught it by my words, as I ought to teach it. Whence hast thou that saying of Bernard: *Non licet tacere cui vitia incumbit deripere et eripere*: Ah! hearken to that noble sentence, and may God bless thee! He who hath taken upon himself to perform this office is not permitted to keep silence, when he doth perceive and know that which it is needful should be done. Because to me and to other preachers and likewise to those who have the care of souls, this duty doth belong, to know how to rebuke, and then to rebuke those who need to be rebuked. But I perceive and know now that I have lost the trot in the amble this morning, for I wished that all the priests who are in this region should find themselves here, and I do not see them. And how useful would it have been to them, whose duty it is to admonish you. In truth I would that there were a bench for them, since that I am bound to teach them also that which is needful; because having the care of souls, of necessity they should know what to say in the confessions that are made to them by their people.

[1] The fountain of which he speaks here is the famous *Fonte Gaia* of Jacopo della Quercia opposite the *Palazzo Municipale*.

[2] We must remember that the sermons were preached very early in the morning, so that there were sure to be some people present who were not yet fully awake.

2. — If it doth befall, young woman, when thou art married that thou through ignorance hast done thy part contrary to the allowed conduct of marriage then thou sayest : Oh, oh ! I knew it not, and still I know it not. I say to thee in answer : That thou knowest it not, doth not excuse the sin. For whosoever doth undertake to practise an art, it is necessary that he know how to do so, in order that he wrong not himself nor others as well. The example thereof. Oh. tell me, now ! if thou undertake to make a garment, and if it be not well made, so that it is neither beautiful nor well fitted to the back of him who hath required thee to make it for him, — what must then be done in regard of this ? Go, remedy it, saith he. What ! I have done it as well as I am able, and know how to do. Nay, tell me this, I ask thee now, dost thou know how to make it ? Thou dost answer, yes, and I then give it to thee to be made. If thou hast made it ill, the worse for thee, — remedy it. Why then didst thou take it upon thyself to make it, not knowing how to do so ? And in like manner would I say of every art and of every trade. So also would I say of public duties and offices. Art thou one of the Priors, or the magistrate, or hast thou another office, and knowest thou not how to perform these duties ? Knowest thou what I would say to thee ? Thou dost sin ever, not doing that which thou art bound to do. The witness thereof thou hast in Paul : *Qui ignorat ignorabitur*. But if a man know not be shall not be known. And therefore know thou this, that once thou, a maiden, hast said yes to thy spouse, thou dost thereby promise him to carry out the marriage lawfully. Thou wilt say perchance : I am a maid, and I know naught of that which it doth not concern a maid to know. And I say in answer to thee this : that before marriage thou shouldst know that which it is needful for thee to know how to perform.

Whosoever doth undertake to practise an art, it is necessary that he know how to do so.

3. — And beforehand thy mother ought to tell it to thee, and to instruct thee in regard of that which is needful. And if she do not so she will go to the home of the devil, and thou with her ; but she will go there head down, and for thee it will suffice that thou dost go head up. What madness doth possess thee, to send thy daughters to this

That mother doth sin most grievously who doth not instruct the maiden how she should carry out the holy sacrament of marriage

holy sacrament with no understanding thereof? Hearken! tell me this: if anyone should go to receive the body of Christ, and should go merely because he saw others go, not understanding or knowing nor what it is, nor upon what conditions he should approach it, tell me, doth not this man commit a sin? Yea, truly he doth, because he ought not to go if he go not upon the conditions prescribed. So likewise of a maiden. She doth marry because she doth see others do so; I say to thee that thou dost sin, if thou know not that which it is right for thee to know. And that which thou seest to be true in respect of this matter, so in like manner do I say of everything else which thou dost undertake to perform, since not performing it well, in this always thou dost sin. So I say likewise of a priest who doth undertake to perform his office, that is to consecrate, and doth know neither the manner of it nor the words, how far thinkest thou that he may be excused? Truly, in nowise whatsoever; he doth always sin, not performing that which doth belong to him. And say now, should a lawyer at any time give his opinion, and not give it rightly, thinkest thou that he doth sin therein? Grievously indeed doth he, and he is bound to make this good. The worse for him is it that he hath done this. And now as is true of these, so likewise is it of the maiden who goes to a husband. She doth undertake to perform this office; it is needful that she know how to perform it; and performing it she should do so lawfully and honestly, — doing it in any other way I say to thee that she doth ever sin. But more doth the mother sin than the daughter, in not teaching her before marriage how she should act. And I say that under pain of mortal sin her mother must instruct her, since not instructing her she doth bring the maiden together with her husband into open peril. And sending her to him in so mad a fashion is as if thou didst send her forth in a boat without her fare. Because it is permitted thee with all honesty to say to her: Daughter, be on thy guard not to do that which is against the commandment of God, since ofttimes young men permit themselves such wicked follies, letting themselves fall into such vanity, et cetera. If thou dost say: She hath no mother, I say to thee that those

women ought to instruct her who are nearest of kin, or other women. If thou wouldst speak of the father, I say to thee that it is not permitted to a father to speak of such things to a maid, but that it is so permitted to women. If she have no kinswomen, let there be found some one at least to instruct her, some venerable and pious women. And therefore, O mothers, you perceive the very grave danger that there is when thy daughters go to their husbands without that you have instructed them. And if the fault may be laid to you, I say that your sin is greater than that of the maiden for she is innocent.

Of My Lady Saragia, who wishing to mock a country fellow is so well answered by him that she is shamed.

4. — Nor is it an excuse that thou art afraid for her to know such things; for there are some men and women who say: I do not wish to hear preaching about such matters. O why dost thou wish not to hear it? Because I wish to follow my own manner of doing, and I shall be excused, not knowing the right manner. Hence said David: *Noluit intelligere ut bene ageret:* She wished not even to hear, in order that she might do after her own fashion. Oh! I do not so because my intent is to do wrong. Moreover such matters ought not to be preached, therefore I do not wish to hear them. What is this? O how then if it be not lawful for thee to do them, is it not lawful to admonish thee? Oh, grievously dost thou err! Knowest thou what I have to tell thee? Thou art my Lady Saragia[1]. Hearken! I will tell thee that which befell upon a time at Siena. There was a certain My Lady Saragia, who was very greedy of those fine big cherries, and she had a vineyard, thou must know, here outside, near the monastery[2]. And the tenant coming here to Siena in May, saith My Lady Saragia to him: O are there as yet no cherries in the vineyard? Saith the tenant: O I was waiting until that they should be a little riper. Said she: See to it that on Saturday thou dost bring me some, or dare not to return hither. He promised her some. On Saturday he took a basket and filled it with cherries, and he cometh to Siena, and doth carry it to My Lady Saragia. When she doth see it, she maketh great

[1] The name of a kind of very large cherry.

[2] The once splendid convent of the Benedictines, outside *Porta S. Marco* and very near the city.

rejoicing, and she taketh the basket. Thou art indeed right welcome ! Oh, how well thou hast done ! And she goeth away into her room with this basket, and doth commence to eat of these cherries by handfuls. They were fine and large, they were monstrous large, in faith, and in short she ate her fill of them. When her husband returned to the house to dinner, the woman carried to the table a little basket of these cherries, and saith to him : the tenant hath come in to us, and hath brought us a few cherries. And when they had dined, she took up some of the cherries and commenced to eat them, the tenant being there present. And eating the cherries she took thereof and gave seven bites to each one of them, and eating them in this manner she said to the tenant: How do you eat cherries in the country outside the walls here? Said the tenant: My Lady, we eat them as you were eating them a little while before — by handfuls ! Woe is me ! cried she — what dost thou say ? What a naughty fellow thou art ! Madame, so do we eat them, in that manner that I say to you !

The horse is careless where you touch it until that you touch it there where it is galled.

5. — Is My Lady Saragia here, who is so abashed by all this that she doth make herself out to be a rabbit, while she is rather a swine ? If thou be so made, by hearing thou wilt amend thyself, and wilt become good, if thou art of good condition ; but if thou art of evil condition, thou wilt say : I have no wish to go there [1] again, and would do after my own will. He who is wicked will do worse than before ; but he who is good will amend himself, and will hold dear what I say to him, and will make it serve him as a good example. He who is good will not murmur ; rather will he say : he hath spoken with great modesty and hath said well in truth, and might even have said far more than that which he hath said ; and he will bless me, because I have taught him the straight path of righteousness according to God and to that which is ordained by the Church. But he who is a sinner, he will call down upon me many curses, because he would willingly follow his own unbridled way, and would do as doth the swine, who sticketh its snout in filth. Knowest thou that which I would say to thee ? The swine accordeth not well with roses ; but

[1] I. e., to the preaching.

if there be here any possessed of evil passions, when they have returned home, they will do worse than they have ever done; so shalt thou know the good from the wicked, and from those worst of all. The good man will say: He hath said well, and will perceive in my words that which is needful to him in time to come. The wicked man will complain; the worst of all will do greater evil than ever before. Ah, I know thee well, thou weed! Hearken, hearken, and be not scandalized; do not do as doth the horse when its back is galled. The horse is careless where thou dost touch it, until that thou dost touch it in that place where it is galled. And when he is touched there, then he cannot endure it. Oh, in like manner, doth the wicked man! The wicked and those who are scandalized by what they hear. Oh, thou wicked rascal, hearken, without being scandalized and without complaining, that which is helpful for thee; and see to it that in practice thou dost follow those paths, and those ways that thou shouldst follow. Do not wish to follow that way from which thou seest thou hast no escape, — against this I warn thee.

This sacrament is called holy matrimony, because people ought to unite with one another holily.

6. — O what marriages are those which are made today, with no regard for what is ordained! Of which it seemeth that in them there is no moderation, but rather you may say passion most unrestrained. O, you mad dogs, see you not that you have put marriage into the hands of the devil, who doth lead thee into every sort of destroying sin? Alack! Were it not better to practise a little restraint and have a little fear of God, and choose instead good customs rather than to live as do beasts, so that between you and the beasts there is no difference? Why is it called holy matrimony? Because you should live together holily, and first you should confess yourselves and receive communion, and out of reverence for the holy body of Christ you should say many devout prayers on this day, before that day in which you come together. And knowest thou what would befall you so doing? First, this is most pleasing to God; then thy soul will be greatly soothed in this world, and thy body will be more sound because of it. Thou wilt know how to abstain at the prescribed times; and from the right duties and conduct, at the proper times you will have every

good, and finally you will have children, if it shall be the will of God, who should all be holy. Look at the other side. If thou be unbridled, without fear, given up to all that is dishonest and impure, if also thou shalt have children, of what condition dost thou think they will be? Consider this, thou!

From whom counsel should be sought in regard of holy matrimony.

7. — I would teach thee, O woman, when thou art about to enter upon holy matrimony what ways thou shouldst use; so that thou mayest never sin in respect of too much or too little. I wish that thou shouldst seek counsel from one who will know how to advise thee right well. Oh, but perchance I shall not be able to understand her in the right way. Thou wilt understand her if thou dost wish so to do. Knowest thou who she is? She is called my Lady Discretion. She will teach thee how much, and when, and how, and if thou dost follow her counsel thou wilt never sin. But if thou understand her not, I wish that thou shouldst go to a sister of hers, whom thou wilt understand better, as I think. Knowest thou what name she hath? She is called My Lady Conscience. If thou dost follow her counsel, again thou wilt never sin. And if forsooth thou shouldst not understand her as well as thou oughtest, so that at times thou shalt say: It seems to me... Ah! I cannot tell if I am doing right; perchance, yes... perchance, no... More then! Wishest thou to know, since thou art in doubt? Yes, go, prithee, to a sister of hers, whose name is My Lady Charity, who will give thee the best counsel that it is possible to give, telling thee that thou shalt contrive not to be the occasion of any sin neither to thyself nor to him. Ah, I do not understand her well! So? If thou dost not understand her, then I would have thee seek counsel from a man, who shall be discreet, and wise, and good, and who shall be instructed; and if he he well instructed and virtuous, he will teach thee the right conduct. But if thou wish good counsel, go not to a friar from Grosseto[1], for such as they keep a man shut up in that ignorance of his in which he should not remain. Knowest thou to whom thou shouldst go? Go to one who hath both knowledge and conscience,

[1] That is, to one who is dull of wit, « di cervel grosso ». Here there is a play on words; Grosseto is the name of a town near Siena.

one of those who know excellently well how to discern that which ought to be done. For one of those dull wits will say to thee : Oh, thou dost stand under obedience to thy husband ! Thou art bound to obey him, thou canst not do otherwise, thou. Thou doest not of thine own wish. Go, go, — thou mayest be excused. Well doth he counsel thee, say I ! Choose one who is good, — not anyone whatever he may be, no ! For sometimes thou wilt go to one who hath a carnal mind, and is not instructed, and who will say to thee : it is permitted thee for the sake of pleasure to thy husband to beautify thyself and to deck thyself out with ornaments. Out upon him ! for he is a beast ; do as I say to thee : go to a man of conscience and of learning, and who is good.

If thou givest a child of thine to a nurse, to be suckled without a lawful reason, thou sinnest.

8. — Is there one here who hath borne a child? Didst thou ever give him to a nurse, to be suckled? What moved thee to do this ? Why ? To procure thyself more pleasure thou hast done it, et cetera, and all the rest of it ![1] When thou didst give him to a nurse at once didst thou place pleasure before God, and thus didst thou fall into sin, and knowest thou what thou hast done ? Thou hast done worse than the she-ass, for the she-ass when she hath brought forth her foal she doth rear it and nurture it. Thou dost not so. The reason because of which thou wilt not suckle it, well dost thou know if it be a lawful reason. If it be lawful, it is not a mortal sin. But it is not lawful in that manner as thou dost think, no : if thou shouldst give thy child to a nurse because thou art weak in health or if thou hast not milk to suffice it, or for other such lawful reasons, thou sinnest not ; but if thou do so in order better to disport thyself, I say that then thou sinnest.

The child doth acquire certain of those customs which she hath who doth suckle him.

9. — Knowest thou what God doth permit to happen sometimes because thou hast not known how to rule thyself? Notwithstanding that it be thy child, and that thou be sage, and of good customs and habits, and discreet, et cetera, ofttimes thou wilt give it to a dirty drab, and from her perforce the child doth acquire certain of those customs

[1] An expression which the Saint often makes use of in his sermons, to imply that he will say no more on this subject because whoever ought to understand has caught his meaning quite clearly enough.

which she hath who doth suckle him. If she who cares for him have evil customs or be of base condition, perforce he doth receive the impress of those customs because of having sucked her polluted blood. And when he doth return home to thee then thou sayest: I know not whom thou art like to, thou art like to none of us; and thou dost not perceive the reason of it, and right well art thou served therein. Dost thou not believe it? Now, make the proof of it. Go, and take some shoots of the vines of our black grapes into Lombardy and Ferrara. Thou knowest how clear it[1] is, and how delicate. Go then, and take some of the wine which is produced by this very vine, and thou wilt see that thou couldst carry it in thy apron all the way to Siena, so coarse is it. And yet it cometh from this very vine. Better yet, go and take a glassful of it and put into it a crawfish, and thou wilt not see it there within, so clouded is the wine. And see how clear and delicate it is here, at Siena! Whence cometh this? In like manner, go, take a stone of those handsome peaches at San Gimignano, and plant it here at Siena, and thou wilt see that it will produce peaches that will seem like distaffs. Oho, what meaneth this? He saith: Knowest thou what it doth mean? Thou hast brought the stone here, but thou hast brought none of that soil. Likewise do I say of the vine: thou didst bring the vine, but thou didst bring no soil; it hath taken the nature of the soil wherein it is nurtured. In like manner I say to thee, woman, who givest thy child, he doth acquire the nature of her who suckleth it. Saith she: Oh, she was created like me. Thou sayest true, but one of you hath not the customs of the other. Hearken! I wish to tell thee what befell not long since at Verona. A man at play said: Let a horse be the wager between you and me; if such a thing be so. Why yes, why yes, why no, — finally they wagered a horse, and one of them lost. When he had lost he led the other to his stable and gave him a colt which was only a very few days old. The other seeing this little colt said: I wish such a horse as I have won from thee. He replied: Thou hast won a horse from me, — here then is a horse. What

[1] Here « it » is evidently intended to refer to the wine.

more wouldst thou have from me? Finally he led away the horse, and having no other means of having it nurtured and cared for, he had it suckled by a she-goat. Knowest thou what came of this after this horse was grown? It leapt like a goat, because it had taken on the nature of that goat. Dost thou wish to prove if this be so? Go, and take a kid and let it be suckled by a sheep, and note what it will grow to be like. Thou wilt see it with quite other hair than if it had been suckled by a goat. In like manner, contrariwise, go, take a lamb and let it be suckled by a she-goat, again, then thou wilt see it with coarser wool than other lambs; and this is only because of the manner of its suckling. And I wish this to be enough for you!

XVI. *How worthy widows should be honoured.*

Let the worthy widow turn all her labour to rearing her children.

1. — Let the widow learn to rear her children, and her grandchildren, and all her family. It is possible that a son reared by a good widow may then govern a city and a province. If thou dost ever go into the confines of the city outside the walls, never do thou leave thy daughter at home, nor let her never go from house to house without thee. See that she be always accompanied by thee, and if she go into any room whatsoever, go then always with her there. About the neighbourhood, and at weddings think well how thou dost let her go thither. Let her not have to do with everyone, et cetera. See to it that thou accustom her so that she may not know how to be without thee, so that even if she be accompanied by others she may be terrified. See to it that she hath never to do with pages or with servants. Trust her never in the house of your kinsmen. See to it, see to it, see to it, that they be never alone even to speak. And see to it, see to it, see to it, that they sleep not with their own brothers when they are arrived at such an age. See that thou dost trust her scarce even to her father, when she is of an age to take a husband. The greater is the love, there trust her least. Yea, yea, say I.

If the widow have no children, she should use her time for the good of her neighbour.

2. — And if the widow have neither children nor grandchildren, what shall she do? Use her time in that which is good and needful for her neighbour, that which thou wouldst have done for thy children and thy grandchildren, this do for thy neighbour. If thou dost wish for mercy, O widow, be merciful. See that to the poor thou dost give some little cooked dish, some garment, when thou seest them

naked; have mercy upon them. See that thou be a little open-handed with that which thou dost possess; see that thou dost never trust thyself to any,-even if thou shouldst come to trust one, trust thy possessions, but not thyself. See to it that notwithstanding that thou hast a good intention, thou goest not rashly about from house to house, because out of a good intention the wolf doth eat the sheep. If thou do not as I say, then marvel not if evil be said of thee. Look to it that as thou wert good married, so thou art perfect now that thou art a widow.

The sage widow must overcome temptations with abstinence and prayers.

3. — Art thou young? See that thou dost overcome thy flesh by means of fasts, in watches [1] and by the use of the discipline. O, why then, would not a little of the discipline be a good thing for thee, three times a week, since before when thou hadst thy husband, thou didst wish to use the discipline? But all things in measure, not too much. Thou knowest that when thy husband lived if thou didst wish to practise such abstinence and fast, and to use the discipline, thy husband would say to thee: I do not wish that thou shouldst do so,-and hindered thee. Now that thou art free, why not? I, therefore, I wish that thou shouldst learn to live like a religious. Be sincere within thy soul: *Quia vere viduae sunt.* She who is a widow in deed, let her follow this rule: If thou art used to read the canonical hours, recite them at their proper times, and never forsake them. If thou canst not read, do as I shall tell thee. In the evening at Compline see that thou dost say seven Pater Nosters and seven Ave Marias. At Matins say twenty-four of them, and for Lauds, say five. At Prime say seven, at Tierce seven more. At Sext seven. At Nones seven more. And again at Vespers say twelve of them. And see that thou fail not to say for the dead at the least, at the least, seven,-and among them name thy husband, as thou art bound to do.

It is an evil practice to sleep upon feathers.

4. — In regard of that which thou shouldst do at night, see that thou dost rise at midnight, or at least at the ringing of matins at the Duomo, and see that thou dost never sleep upon feathers, if thou art in good health. Thou

[1] Times of watching and praying.

mayest seem to thyself to perform a great penance if thou dost use this practice of not sleeping on feathers. Seek, and beyond Rome, nor even in any place as far as fifty miles from Siena, are there to be found those who sleep on feathers. How many gentlefolk there are in the world who sleep not in bed but upon mattresses! Oh, it is an evil practice this one of sleeping on feathers. Eat much, and drink much, and sleep much, and thou wilt come to harm! I would teach thee to remove the occasions which may lead thee to fall into sin. Goest thou to sleep? Yes. Come now, do thou sleep clad! Saith she: In thiswise I cannot sleep. Even so, I will teach thee to do it. See that thou dost keep awake to a late hour, for I promise thee that if thou dost watch so, and await the desire for sleep, then wilt thou sleep, on the very ground, on the stones themselves. Likewise I admonish thee that thou use food which shall be simple, and so shall not heat thy blood. I say not that thou shouldst do so if thou be weak in health. Oh! if thou dost use thyself to sleep clad, I promise thee that it is the best mouthful that thou didst ever taste. Oh, what is it thou dost seek in sleep? In winter thou dost seek heat, in summer cool freshness. I promise thee if thou sleep upon straw, it is indeed most warm in winter, and in summer it is very fresh and cool.

How the rogue Ghino cured an abbot of stomach-ache.

5. — Hast thou understood naught of this? I say to thee that in sleep thou must be clad and that thou shouldst not sleep on a feather bed. And that thy food should be such as shall not heat thy blood, because herein there is very grave danger, if thou art hot-blooded and hast such food as may heat thee. Saith that woman there who doth live dissolutely: I can not live in that manner, because so I lose the will to eat; nor this nor that doth please me, naught of that which I eat is pleasing to me. Oh, knowest thou what thou hast need of? Thou hast need of the medicine of the rogue Ghino [1] di Iaco. I wish that thou shouldst know of this, O widow! I promise thee that is a good thing for widows. The rogue Ghino was a sage man. Would

[1] Ghino, diminutive of Meaghino (from *Domenico*). Boccaccio speaks of him in the second novel the tenth day of his *Decameron*, and Dante introduces him in Canto VI. of the *Purgatory*.

that he had used his intelligence for good, as he used it for evil! There came to him a fat abbot, very fat, in faith, thou must know, as fat, thou mightest say, as the abbot of Pacciano, who was on his way to the baths at Petriuolo, to get thin. Saith this rogue Ghino: Where art thou going? Saith he: I am on my way to the baths at Petriuolo. O what is thy malady? He answered and said: I am going to these baths because it hath been told to me that they will be very helpful to me, because nothing of that which I eat is pleasing to me, and I can digest nothing. Saith Rogue Ghino: O I will cure thee, in the best way in the world. And so he put him into a room which was barred and bolted, and he gave him each day a handful of beans and some cold water. He, having naught else, ate the beans and drank the water, in order not to die of hunger. And at the close of four days Rogue Ghino had given to him a very little bread with a little water, as before. And he ate this bread, which did seem to him like sugar. The next day he had given to him a little stale bread and musty, with a little water. And so having forced him for many days to this manner of living, finally he brought him out of this room and said to him: How do you feel in respect of your stomach? O-o-o! I feel as if I could eat stones. Saith Ghino: Do you think that you would have been so quickly cured at the baths? He said, no. Saith Rogue Ghino: How much would you have spent at the baths? Saith the abbot: I should perchance have spent sixty florins. Saith Rogue Ghino: Give unto me now that which thou wouldst have spent, and let this suffice; it is well that you are cured. In short this abbot gave him that money which he would have spent at the baths, and perchance something besides as well. Going then to Rome it was asked of this abbot how he had been cured, and to all he told the manner in which Ghino had cured him. And whensoever he heard of any that had this malady, he would say to them all: Go to Ghino. So would I say to thee, widow, who can not eat this nor that; learn to use the medicine of Ghino. Do not as thou wert used to do when thou hadst a husband, when thou didst live on the delicate meat of little birds; see to it that thou dost live thy life according to rule in that which thou hast to do.

Three sins were the occasion of every great overthrow.

6. — Three sins were the occasion of every great overthrow. These were pride, gluttony, and sloth. If the widow have these, oh! she is of evil condition, ugh, ugh, ugh! If thou be in this road, return, in the manner I have advised, return to the straight and right road of Saint Jerome. See that thou dost observe the seven canonical hours, as I have instructed thee, and besides this see that thou dost return to the spinning-wheel; spin thou wool or linen, weave, cook, see that thy hands be ever busy. Saith she: O thinkest thou that I have need of spinning or cooking? I need not to do this! I reply to thee so: Thou hast no need of it for thyself? Do it for others; see that thou dost cook or spin for the poor he hath need thereof. Patch and mend the poor with thine own hands; make for him a shirt, spin and weave for his needs, for if thou do so, thou wilt resist the devil and wilt not stand idle. Practise charity towards the Church; make very fine corporals, as white and as beautiful as thou canst, for those are the table cloths of the Lord God. Oh, reflect, widow, if God should come to eat with thee at thy board wouldst thou not do great honour to him? Yes. Thou wouldst lay thereon a white cloth, with joyful and with great rejoicing. And therefore, reflect in this manner, that upon that other cloth must he come. And so thou shouldst be orderly in all that which thou hast to do. If thou hast children, see that thou dost teach them good customs, that thou dost admonish them, and if thou canst perform other works of charity, do these also. Go little to the church, and go not thither alone, nor secretly. And when thou dost go to make thy confession, go to those who are good and faithful. And as I say to the widows, so likewise do I say to all of you women, confess your sins, and confess them clearly, so that they may be well understood, in the manner that you know I myself have told you, for you have understood from me what is needful.

Every widow who is a prattler and prying, see that thou dost avoid her.

7. — Another thing there is which must be blamed in the widow, it is curiosity. Paul writing to Timothy in the fifth chapter, saith as doth follow: *Viduas verboses e curiosas fuge.* When the widow doth go abroad as a tatler, oh! how ill doth it beseem. For ofttimes they may be found talking together so that they seem to be rooks: kia, kia,

kia. Do not in this manner, talk not so much; I know not what to say of you. Never have I seen so many given over to bad habits as I see to-day. I see and I know so much, that I know what Bertha is spinning. [1] I see these widows who go about in such a way that all their manner and their bearing seem to me to proclaim their wantonness openly. You seem not to me to be as you were used to be; to-day I see the widow wearing a long mantle, which is pleated, with her forehead bare, and her mantle thrown back from her face, thou dost note, so that she doth show her cheek. And how doth she deck and array herself in front! Dost thou wish a husband? Go, and take him, in the name of God, and be quick! In every act they betray their carnal minds; they wear slippers which are as high as those which married women wear. This doth show that thou wouldst cast on that man whom thou art awaiting there, such glances from thy eyes as thou didst cast on the other, She doth take thought for her beauty in all that she can or may. Dost thou wish a husband? No. O but all thy actions cry out that thou dost, and everyone of thy members; so that it would be seemly that thy kinsmen should so torment her that she should never have peace, nor any further desire to go abroad in this shameless fashion, saying to her: We are unwilling that thou shouldst do so great dishonour to our familly; and they should all set upon her. And so every widow who is a talker, and prying, see that thou dost avoid her; wish not to have to do with her. But the good ones among the widows, yes, God is merciful towards them; understand not by this those who are hypocrites, who seem to be widows in dress, but are full within of carnal desires. Oh! they do well to murmur against me, if their backs are galled! The good will say good of me, and the evil will say evil.

[1] A popular saying, to signify: I know everything that happens.

XVII. *Once more of party feeling.*

Of the Grace which God bestows upon those whom he draweth near to himself.

1. — Lay to thy heart this example, which doth show thee how the Grace of God cometh to men. Seest thou those windows? One of them is wholly open, one open but a little way, and one less. Even by way of those which are shut fast there doth enter some of the Grace of God, since that there are certain tiny crevices therein. And by way of every one of those windows there doth enter something of the splendour of the sun, but here more and there less; for so much or so little brightness doth enter there within according as each is more or less open. So is it with those who wish for Grace from God, according as he doth dispose himself so hath he Grace: if he doth show himself very well disposed, God giveth him very much of it; if he doth show himself but little disposed, then God giveth him but little Grace. And to the man who doth shut himself away from it, even to him God would give of his Grace. Aha! Old Boy, who hindered us on the day before yesterday when thou didst cause the rain to fall, despite thee do I preach this morning; for well do I believe that the sermon of to-day will be more useful than that one would ever have been. Nevertheless, I said then all that which I could say.

In all the rest of the world together not so many idols are adored as in Italy.

2. — I said of whosoever bore devices belonging to the parties of the Guelfs and the Ghibellines in any way whatsoever, that this was naught else than adoring the devil. The reason, the witness, and the example thereof thou didst hear on the day before yesterday; but I said not then to thee that which I shall say to-day. Oh! is there any Jew here present? I know not whether or not there

be one; — if he wore an O on his breast,[1] then should I know him. Read thou, from the time of the Apostles to this present time, and then after Christ was crucified, and after he sent the Holy Ghost, — not then nor even in the Old Testament did the devils ever do so much as they do now while all the world doth follow their wish. In every part of the world there hath always been some few, or many even, who have had the fear of God in their hearts. But to the shame of Italy will I say that which I say; that I believe there are not more idols adored in all the rest of the world together than are adored in this part, — where you are almost all Guelfs and Ghibellines, who do adore nothing less than idols. Seek among the pagans. Whom do the pagans adore? They adore one God. Oh, but the idols which they used to adore, where are they? They are in these devices, which are to be found throughout Italy. Where is the seat of our faith? It is in Rome. And Rome is in Italy, therefore it is surrounded by these idols, and in these devices are adored the devils. They are no more to be found among pagans, but among the Christians. And if devils have been adored by these partisans, and if they have never done penance for this, upon what place thinkest thou they have fallen? If they die without repentance, and perform not penance for this, they will die accursed, and he who is now dead hath died accursed.

Of a mad fellow who grew wroth with his own shadow.

3. — To the partisan so difficult doth it prove to bear with the contrary party, that even if his brother or his son or his father were contrary to him, he would make every endeavour to kill him! Hearken! I wish to give thee an example of this, and thou perchance will lay it up in thy memory. There was once a mad fellow who was travelling towards the west, and he was carrying a staff in his hand, and the sun was behind him, and it cast his shadow

[1] Milanesi here points out that most severe laws against the Jews were enacted at different times by popes, communes, and princes of Italy, the motive for these being political, rather than moral or religious. What prompted these laws was the practice of usury, which, forbidden among the Christians by civil as well as by canon law, was, it may be said, carried on exclusiveby by the Jews .... Among the laws of the Sienese Republic may be cited one enacted in 1439, which required the Jews, both men and women, to wear on the outer garment, over the breast, to the right, an O about three and a half inches high, made of yellow cloth.

before him. When he perceiveth this shadow, it doth seem to him to be another man with a stick in his hand, as he had; straightway doth he run and fall upon him to belabour him with his stick; and the shadow doth run in like manner, and when he had run a little way, being unable to come up with him, he stopped for weariness. And then did he rise up again and again betake himself to running that he might come up with him; finally when he had run a little way, he came to a certain road where he was forced to turn; and the shadow now came beside him, and was cast on the slope of a little hill in such a way that it grew to be tall and erect. When this fellow saw the shadow erect, with stick in hand, then he placed himself there in readiness with his stick and he grew so wroth with his shadow that he broke his own head. In like manner, and to the same purpose, is the Guelf made and the Ghibelline. Brainless Madmen! who because of such mad folly do break your own heads, and those of all thy kinsmen! For verily if I were emperor, — but impossible, I know well.... I lack the staff of office! Oh, I should have them kept without food! Oh! I should force them to cast off this sin, who do not perceive it, and who die accursed. Ah, prithee! do not despair, — repent thyself, and do as I tell thee.

How the Pope sent Friar Bernardine to Siena to bring to an end the divisions there.

4. — You know that commencing to preach on the feast of the Assumption I said to you that when I was at Rome the Pope told me that I should come here; and likewise your bishop, who is now a cardinal, he also said the same to me: for these your divisions having grieved them they said to me that in very truth they wished me to come. And hearing the reason for this I said within myself: Truly do I wish to go thither, because I think in my heart that some good may be accomplished there and I believe truly, in faith, that the Pope doth love you and wisheth you well. I am come here upon their order, and I am come here most willingly, and I pray you all that you will cast off all these parties and these divisions, in order that there may ever be peace among you, concord, and unity. Oh, look ye, what tares are sown among you, because of these parties alone and because of naught else!

How a labourer took fright at a great fly, which got inside a little keg of his.

5. — Reflect that anyone who holdeth with these parties, when he seeth one of the contrary party who by chance looketh at him askance, he thinketh: — nay then, he hath said some evil of me. In like manner, if he see a motion of the hand, or a sign with the lips, everything, he doth believe, is said or done in his despite; and in order to assure himself of it, because in truth he hath not understood, he will betake himself thither to the side of some other who thinketh no evil, and will ask of him: Hist! Didst thou hear that which such a one said of me? He, perchance to satisfy him, and not out of malice, will say: it did seem to me that he spoke of thee, but in faith I understood not that which he said. Then will he go to another and will say the same to him, and this fellow will pay heed to him and will say that he did hear the other speak some slander. O you cursed fellow! dost thou perceive not into what danger thou dost bring both one and the other of these, through thy own wicked speech? I say it is possible, — as I have ofttimes said to you, — that one of these bearers of evil tales may ruin a whole city, most easily of all when there are to be found therein souls already swollen with fury. Hence saith Job: *Ira est ignis usque ad consumationem devorans* Anger is a fire which once kindled within doth burn so that it devours everything which it doth find in its way. For because of the anger that was inside thee, wert thou wroth with him; when he spoke he spoke not of thee, and yet thou didst believe that he was saying evil of thee. The hate which thou didst bear him made this suspicion come to thee. And this suspicion of thine doth so work within thy mind, that thou dost seem to thyself to be ever at strife, for even when thou sleepest, if a cat make a noise, thou wilt rise up out of thy bed in terror, and in thy heart thou sayest naught else than: To arms! To arms! To arms! This deriveth from naught else than from suspicion; as befell the man who was busied in weeding a field of his, and his little keg by him empty, and a great fly got inside there and began to fly about and about in order to escape from out of it. Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz! When the fellow hears this, straightway he betook him to his heels along the road with his little keg, believing that

it was a trumpet, because this was in the time of war; and he went along to his house crying out continually: To arms! To arms! To arms! The enemy are upon us! The people of the place all seized up their arms, crying: Who is it? Who is it? And in sum it was a great fly.

Whosoever dieth in notorious mortal sin, should not be buried in holy ground.

6. — Of a thousand partisans, not one is saved. I have already told thee before that this is in truth one of the most grievous sins which can be committed. Hence if they do never confess it because they make it not a matter of conscience, what, think you, should become of their souls? Evil indeed must the end be. Therefore take this as a sovereign rule, that he who dieth in notorious mortal sin should not be buried in holy ground, but should be buried in a ditch with asses. Saith Augustine, that this is a rod with which God doth chastise the wicked after this manner; so that ofttimes, because of his obstinacy in supporting his party he is murdered. What thinkest thou should become of him? What forsooth? Eh! these obstinate men understand not that which I say. The reason thereof is that they have not the least will to do so, and not having good will they are without charity, and being without charity, God loveth them not. Hence then, to the home of the devil with thee, — and thy body into the ditch!

XVIII. *Of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary.*

Friar Bernardine was born and was born again on the day of the Nativity.

1. — Every one of you hearken and attend with care. I am to speak of the Mother of Christ Jesus the Blessed. And I wish you to know that I was born on the same day that this day is[1], and also on this same day was I born again, for to-day it is the twenty-third year since I put on my friar's habit, and to-day it is the twenty-third year since I promised poverty, chastity, and obedience. So do I pray God that I may die either upon this same day or on the day of the Assumption. And likewise have I the name Bernardine, descended unto me from Saint Bernard, so devout a lover of the Blessed Virgin. And therefore do I wish to speak this morning of her splendour, with which great splendour she doth illumine all the world. And thou who art here to write this down, pay careful heed.

There is as great difference between thy understanding and that of Mary as there is between understanding what thing the leg of a fly is, and understanding all things.

2. — How great difference is there, think you, between your understanding and that of Mary? There is as great difference as there is between understanding what thing the leg of a fly is, and understanding all things. Further. To be short, thou dost understand naught in comparison of the understanding which Mary hath. But let us show a better witness of this: take the understanding of every learned man, and look at that which they comprehend of the creations of God, and even adding thereunto Augustine, who said so much that was noble, in regard of them, I say that all this is naught in comparison of the understanding of Mary. Better, take fifty men of great learning, take one who is unlearned, and put before them these three words.

[1] He was born September 8, 1380.

O boys! you there who are selling candles, it is you I mean [1]. God was not created in the beginning, now is he infinite, and immortal he shall ever be. Have these boys understood me these words? But better than they has this woman here understood me, and better than she thou, man of intelligence, and better yet doth a doctor understand them. But even better did Saint Augustine understand them. And how great a difference thinkest thou there is between thy understanding and that of Augustine? Thy vision in comparison of this is as if thou shouldst see a firefly and he should see the sun. How great a difference was there, thinkest thou, between the vision of Augustine and that of the Apostles, after that they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost? As great a difference as between the sun and the moon. O how great a difference thinkest thou there is between the understanding of a blessed spirit and that of Saint Augustine or of Saint Paul in the flesh? There is between them as great a difference as between the heaven of heavens and the point of a needle. O the Apostles, who now are blessed, how much thinkest thou that they understand? More than when they were in the flesh? A-a-h! they now understand so much more that it is a thing incredible. And now proceed, now we are come to Mary. What opinion hast thou of her in comparison of the others? Wishest thou that I should tell to thee a great wonder? Uniting together the angels, archangels, thrones, dominations, virtues, powers, principalities, cherubim, seraphim, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all the other blessed spirits, there is between her understanding alone and that which all these do understand a greater difference and more than there is between understanding the creation of all things, and understanding the point of a needle.

In this world those things cannot be understood which exist or are performed in glory.

3. — Look thou to what a height we have risen; we have risen even to the life eternal. To the same purpose. The impossibility of comprehending God doth require that we have other evidence of him in heaven than upon earth.

[1] To the little boys who were selling their candles in the Piazza where the sermons were preached.

Sano di Pietro - Saint Bernardine preaching in the Piazza del Campo

Hast thou understood naught of this? Hast thou thy husband here with thee? If thou hast him not, summon him, and let him not go away from thee. Now I wish to make thee understand this better by an example. Take this name Jesus, which is the name above every name; make a young child in the cradle to say it, — a tiny child who hath his little mouth full of milk, — and it hath sweetness in it, to be sure, but very little, for that he hath little understanding of it. Say it thou, woman, Jesus. More sweetness wilt thou have of it than had the child, because thou dost feel that this name Jesus doth signify to thee in thy heart that he is the Saviour, that is, God and man. If a devout man shall say it with devotion, he will have even greater sweetness of it than thou, woman. If Saint Augustine should say it or Saint Bernard, more sweetness yet they drew from it; so sweet a savour, so much honey, so much sugar, that it was a thing incredible. Tell me: how great a difference thinkest thou there is for Saint Paul between the sweetness that he knew in this life, and the sweetness that he knoweth now in life eternal? From this name alone he hath more sweetness than ever creature had in this world, or could be able ever to have. Hast thou understood me, O woman? I say that this name of Jesus bringeth to each of us feelings of different sweetness, for one doth understand it in one way, and one in another. Each one doth draw from it sweetness, but one more than another; and so will it be also in heaven, one will draw from it more sweetness, another less.

Jesus hath no other name, and who saith the contrary of this is a monster.

4. — Here upon the earth now we know this name by figure, as in a glass, which doth reflect the true object for thee, but in glory, it will be otherwise; for in glory we shall see him face to face. And by that sight of him we shall comprehend him, and see him as he ought to be seen and comprehended without other means. If thou shouldst say to me: O how shall this name of Jesus be understood? I say to thee in answer that I know not, and not knowing it, I should endeavour in vain to make thee understand it. There are many who say: I know that Jesus hath another name, which when it is pronounced, the heavens do tremble, and the earth, and hell. Knowest thou how I do an-

swer thee? Thy knowledge is a chamber of ignorance and a puffing up of thy mind. Say, Jesus, and say it with as great reverence as thou canst, and let those who will say what they wish, for we know that the angel said to Mary that so she should call him. O in heaven the name of Jesus is other than this! And they will persevere in thinking what this name may be; and there have been such as say: I know this name, and they will speak it, — but notwithstanding it maketh not the heavens and the earth to tremble. And of such as these there have been who have written a name and given it as a brief, saying that whosoever should speak or see it, he not being a holy man, that so he might do great harm. And they say also that they are unwilling to teach it to anyone, and they will cause a promise to be made to them that they will never open it nor show it. Knowest thou what I say ofttimes of such people, and so in like manner thou mayest say? Say that he is a monster. I say to thee that if thou dost hold and believe that this be so, thou art a heretic together with him. Thy opinion is like unto that of the Jews, accursed and most wicked of men, for they said of the miracles that Christ performed that this was because once he went into the temple, wherein there was written a name which could neither be named nor known; and surrounding this name they kept many dogs who should guard that place in order that it might not be learned, or read, or written, or taken away in any manner whatsoever; and they said that whosoever had it, he would be able to perform any marvellous deed. And they said that Christ entered into that place by craftiness and that he took this name, and that he cleft his thigh and put it therein; and then being returned home he drew it forth, and that by means of it he did all those great marvels which he performed. Oh, what vain fancy was this! Oh, cursed madness! The belief in this was it not of the devil? And so do I say likewise of thee who dost believe in such follies.

Friar Bernardine defends himself against his adversaries.

5. — Hence to comfort you in regard of this holy name I say to you that this which I have preached of the holy name of Jesus, I do confirm, and I tell you that I have said to you only one part of the thousand parts which there

are to say, and which should be believed. And if there be any one who doth wish to give the lie to that which I have said to thee, let him say it to my face, — do not strike me, thou, like a traitor, because thou couldst fell a giant to the earth if thou shouldst come up behind him. Do you need to make so much ado? O, O here I am! He who hath aught to say to me, say it to me to my face that I may reply to him; and if thou wish not to say it to me, write it to me, and we shall see what I have said that is wrong. I am one of those who wish to hold to that which Holy Church doth hold.

We have given unto God more than we have received.

6. — Which is more? That which God hath given to human nature, or that which he hath received? Which is more? Grace or Glory? Glory. Hence we have given more than we have received. He is beholden to us. Eh! Let us hear what God hath given to man. God made man of slime and set him in paradise, where there were four rivers, where there were many beautiful trees, many delicate fruits, all pleasant to the sight and perfect. He gave him his own likeness; he set him in a place where there was neither cold nor heat, a most attempered place. Many, many things he gave him, more than I can reckon. Let us see now that which human nature hath given him in return. He made man of slime, and have we not given him in return his son of flesh, pure and clean without a spot, in all perfectness? He gave to man as his food, apples of the earth, and Mary gave him of her milk — so pure, in exchange for the life of this son. O, o, o, o! Have you seen any milk of the Virgin Mary, O women? Know you that she had so much milk only as sufficed for the little tiny mouth of Christ Jesus, and not more; nor believe thou that there is any of it. Home again![1] Know ye that one drop of that milk valued more than all the trees he ever gave us. And in like manner as God commanded Adam, saying that he should beware of the apple-tree, that he should not eat thereof, for if so he should die, leaving him freedom of will; so did Mary greatly love this son Jesus, so that she trained and taught him, nor ever left him, while he was little. When

[1] See footnote 2, p. 8.

he was growing, she taught him : Go, do thus or thus, my son ; go thither, to such a place, — go quickly ! And so did she with him, as if he were a mere human creature. God gave clothing to Adam and Eve of the skins of sheep and Mary gave her sweet son a woven garment of purple, which as he grew so it grew ever by so much. If God made Adam to his image and likeness, so Mary bore him to his likeness, and more beautiful and wise and powerful than God made Adam. Adam was mere man, but Jesus was man and God, the Lord of the whole world.

XIX. *How he who hath an office must administer justice.*

Justice is constancy in the intention to be always just.

1. — Love justice, you that are the judges of the earth. What is justice? Justice consists in..... looking at me. Hast thou understood? Look at me! [1] Justice may be conceived of in many and varied ways, but among others justice is constancy in the intention to be always just. Oh, you there at the fountain, who are selling your wares, go and do so elsewhere! Do you not hear me, O you there at the fountain? [2] Home again! [3] I say that justice doth consist in a constant and unceasing good intention; that as thou knowest, it wavereth not, but is ever stable, and that through it each hath rendered unto him that which is his, and that which doth befit him; that is, to the wicked is rendered punishment, and to the good, rewards; to the just, favour, and to the guilty, terror; to the good, peace, and to the wicked, war. Let him learn this morning who doth wish to have those offices in which the men of this world are judged.

Of an ape which burned a bear out of revenge.

2. — Lo! I wish to tell you an example which happened in the court of the king of France, or of the king of Spain. He had an ape and a bear, and he kept them for

[1] Here he recalls the attention of some one who was distracted and was looking about him.

[2] These words addressed by the Saint to people who were selling their wares near the fountain, at some distance from the place where he was preaching, recall what Facio wrote of our author in his *De Viris Illustribus:* « Eloquent and vehement in his preaching, he was gifted with an incredible memory. So clear and exquisite was his enunciation that his listeners never tired of his sermons; so sure and sustained was his voice that it never once failed him when he was preaching, and, what is still more wonderful, in a great assembly of people he could be heard with perfect ease even by those who were farthest away » (A. C. 41) B.

[3] See Footnote 2, p. 8.

his disport. It happened that the ape having young, the bear killed one little ape and devoured it. The ape seeing what had been done, it seemed as if she were crying out for justice, for she betook herself to well nigh all those of the household; she turned now to one side, and now to the other, about each one of those whom she saw. And seeing that she was not understood, one day she broke her chain and went to that place wherein was the bear; for it seemed as if she said: since that no one doth execute justice in respect of the crime of this bear, I myself will execute it. In that place where was the bear there was much hay. This ape took some of the hay and collected it together around and about the bear; in sum, she put fire to it and burned the bear, and in this manner herself executed justice. — Seest thou that the beasts endeavour in every way that justice be executed, and render that which is merited according to the deed which the other hath performed. — And by this thou dost see that nature dictates it to thee.

There are four occasions of wrongdoing which may bring destruction upon any great city.

3. — There are four occasions of wrongdoing which may bring destruction upon any great city. The first is hate. The second is love. The third is fear. The fourth is hope. These make a man to judge wrongly. He who hath hate within him turneth away those to whom he wisheth not well. He who hath love doth advance those of his own house. He who doth fear doth act always out of fear when he seeth one of those whom he feareth. He who doth hope endeavoureth ever to raise aloft him from whom he may have somewhat that shall be useful to him; and therefore doth he send forward him whom he loveth and send him behind whom he hateth, doth send him forward in whom he hath hope and him behind whom he doth fear. It doth seem to him always that the thing is in size double that which in truth it is, one doth seem to him as two; that is to say, he seeth not as a whole, but his vision is divided in two. Wishest thou that I show thee in an example of what condition is his vision. Hist! I would explain so that I may be understood by these women. Women, if you have a spindle, not too large, or a paternoster,[1] one of those

[1] One of the larger beads of the rosary, on which the Our Fathers are recited.

which are very large, put your middle finger upon the spindle and your next finger to this also upon the paternoster, and you shall see that they will seem each one of them two. Now make trial of it, quickly, that I may see you do so for a little. And knowest thou what this doth signify? Oh! that one is too small, it will not serve. [1] It doth signify that what is greater doth dominate the smaller because this is less powerful. So doth it seem to him, when he hath performed one thing it doth seem to him two. In like manner if he speak a thing, good or evil, it doth seem to him two. Again knowest thou how he doth? Thou hast heard that when one sayeth a word aloud it doth seem that this selfsame word is repeated opposite to him? Knowest thou how it doth sometimes befall me by chance in my preaching? While I am saying a word it doth rebound from over there among those palaces, and it seemeth two words. As doth befall here in our Piazza, where if a word be spoken aloud, straightway it is repeated in answer to thee from here opposite, especially before sunrise. If thou dost wish to see if I speak the truth, to anyone who may be here in that pulpit of stone, [2] each single word doth seem two; and there is greater reverberation before the sun doth rise than afterwards. If thou shalt say: Antony! thou art answered, Antony! It seemeth two to thee, and is one. So doth it seem to him; for one doth seem to him two because he hath not justice within him.

A miser should not be elected to any office whatsoever.

4. — I hear you have made it a law that no usurer shall enter any office. I praise you therefor, because you have done well indeed; but I say to thee: What manner of man shall he be that goeth to this office? You have done well to provide that no usurer shall go thither, but who will go then, since we are all usurers? And who is he who is not a usurer, or who doth not favour usury? I know of no such man as this. One way there is. Marry! Let us send thither the women! Ah! but yet there are women who in-

[1] He addresses someone who was trying to do as he had suggested, but who had too small a rosary.

[2] Here he is speaking of the marble pulpit which was then near the great door of the Palace, and from which the crier announced decrees of justice and proclaimed laws.

cline to usury and encourage it, so therefore it is not fitting that even they should go thither. Marry! Let us send thither the peasants who go begging, and these forsooth would be good men to send thither since they go begging perforce because of their need. Have you paid heed to that which doth befall when a miser entereth an office? He doeth as doth the wolf, who doth purge himself inwardly. When he is elected officer, he hath so great a desire to enter the office that he doth seem to waste away utterly with the great longing thereof, and the time doth seem to him an eternity before he may enter therein to fleece now this man and now to rob that other; precisely as doth the wolf when he is sick from repletion, who goeth to purge himself in a sandy place, in order that he may better fill himself up again, and with yet more. Hearken, I could tell thee of that which a friar once saw, and he who saw it told it to me. He said that a wolf had taken a wild boar near to a place where the friars lived; when he had killed this boar then he left it there where it lay, and went to a river and filled his belly with sand, and purged himself wholly. That river was near by these friars. There was one of them who when he knew of the condition of the wolf bethought himself to go thither, and went, and carried off this boar. Within a little, they lying full low to see what would befall, lo! the wolf doth return there and findeth not the boar. Think you what then befell! Out of the great fury that he flew into, he beat his head so hard on the ground, that he fell dead.

There are such as leave their crafts to have offices; and in thiswise go to plunder the country outside the walls.

5. — Now cometh the point! Knowest thou how such greedy men as these do act when they are elected to an office? They ask: How much money did such an one get from this office? He got two hundred florins from it. Truly, eh? I shall get three hundred with ease from thence. And thus he goeth to the office with that wicked intent to put it into operation. And knowest thou how he goeth thither? Thither he goeth with his banner streaming behind him; he goeth in with all speed and with banner outspread. O how great evil is done, — oftentimes because of not reflecting what he ought to do. For there will be such a one who in order to have these offices of ours, will abandon his shop,

his craft; and because of this the crafts and trades of the city diminish. Since such as these abandon their crafts to go and plunder, they do great damage to the city through not performing their trades, and they go forth to rob and plunder the country here outside the walls, and the poor men.

6. — Such men as these may be likened to cats. The cat settleth itself before a tiny hole whence the mouse should come out, and there will she lie in await all day to take it; and when it is come almost forth, in that moment she doth spring upon it. So doth the miser, who seeketh an office; when he heareth that they are to draw for an office he doth make every endeavour to get there by means of ballots, and therefore will he go from one friend to another, saying: O my good sir, such an office is before you. I prithee help me by thy vote. And in thiswise he will go about beseeching them all as it were, from friend to friend who is of the Council. O thou wretched fellow! How thinkest thou to do well abandoning thy shop, and pursuing after this one and that one? And if thou shalt have the office, what then? Thou art six months in the office, and after that thou wilt be for a year or longer without any office; and during this time in which thou hast no office thou dost consume that which doth remain to thee, whereas thou mightest instead have gained something by following thy trade or thy craft. And therefore providing as you intend in regard of names in the urns [1] in my opinion you have disposed excellently well: and see that you put in charge only good men and competent, and those who deserve well. If you wish to maintain the city and its confines in good estate, put no rascal in charge there. Saith the rascally fellow: Oh! there is no chance for me. I make answer and say to thee, that it is in truth well done, that when the good and welfare of the republic is regarded it is better than if what were done concerned only the welfare of a particular man.

Only the names of good men and competent and those who deserve well, should be put in the urns.

7. — The first poison is tyranny, for oftentimes there will be some officer who in his own esteem is proud and haughty indeed, but in truth is an extortioner and an

The first poison in him who ruleth is tyranny.

[1] Here he expresses his approval of the plan by which they were to draw from among the names of their best citizens, of most competence for public affairs.

exacting tyrant. Ofttimes such as these may be called yearly exactors [1] or monthly, or weekly, or daily, or on every morning or every evening, or twice daily, or even hourly. Knowest thou the yearly exactor? It is he who doth oppress men by exacting money from them every year. The monthly exactor is worse, for he doth exact it monthly. The weekly exactor is even worse, who doth exact it weekly. The daily exactor again is worse, since every day he doth snatch and extort. The exactor on every morning is yet worse, since every morning in which he doth perform the duties of his office, he doth ever extort. In like manner doth the exactor on every evening. But what shall we say of the hourly exactor? We may say that he doth ever exact and oppress and extort, from whosoever doth come within his clutches. And dost thou wish to be called « rector » ? This name fitteth thee not, for thou art not a rector indeed. We may take away that first *e* and put there in its place an *a*, and that word will be thy name, which will then be « ractor », with talons like the teeth of a rake. Would you know those who are not deserving of office? Go, look at their talons; if you find that these are hooked as the talons of the kite or the goshawk, they are of the number of those voracious officials, in respect of whom you must be on your guard, never to send them into any office. In like manner also see to it that their mouths curve not downwards, you know, as many birds whose beaks curve downwards, and who drink not water. If you see a beak crooked in that manner you may know thereby that they never drink water, but tear open the skin and suck the blood. Such birds as these lay few eggs. They are not made like our hens, who have not crooked claws nor beaks. O these lay many eggs, in faith! Knowest thou what « rector » means? One who doth lay many good eggs; but the « ractor » doth naught else than plunder, and devour, and despoil!

The second poison of him who ruleth is simony.

8. — Hearken! Wouldst thou perceive which those are who deserve not to be rectors, and who if they are so you would do well to rid yourselves thereof? When thou seest

[1] In the Italian throughout this passage there is a continual play on the words « tiranni » *tyrants* (here used to mean also those who draw money out of another yearly) and the verb « tirare » *to draw*.

an official who doth prolong a case and bringeth it never to a conclusion, and doth ever fleece each one of the two sides, these are not deserving of any office whatsoever. I have been in such a place where there doth exist this order of affairs: the rector must have so much for every *lira* and so much for every florin; and so doth he fleece the poor man and likewise the rich. Seest thou this prolongment? It is a devouring. Knowest thou that there are such as wish not that disputes and complaints should ever come to an end? When an appeal is made to a governor he doth first require a fee from him who ought to have the money, he is always given something. Likewise the man who ought to have the money giveth him also so much for every *lira*, and this having been paid, he seemeth to himself to have performed a worthy action, and he departeth, with a song. He who ought to have something hath naught, but passeth his time in going from office to office; and so the amount is consumed for both parties, for every official doth act with the same tranquil indifferency. One official goeth out, another entereth office; he receiveth his fee; and he likewise goeth out of office, and the man is never paid. And in this manner justice is never done.

The third poison is pride.

9. — Be not puffed up! Hast thou an office? Yes. O hold not thy head so high, lest thou knock it against something. If thou wilt but consider him who hath an office, thou wilt see that he hath a great burden. Is this not evident for example, that he who carrieth a heavy burden must walk stooped? Is there no porter here? Oh, porters! when you have a sack of wheat on your back, you know in truth that you walk thus a little stooped, and the greater the weight the more dost thou stoop forward. Know you not how you walk stooping forward at Michaelmas, then when people move from their houses?[1] When thou bearest on thy back a great and heavy coffer... what do I intend by this? I say that he who is a rector hath a very heavy burden. Do not thou as many whom I have seen, who, when they are in office, repose themselves with legs outstretched

[1] Here he alludes to the custom, now a thing of the past, of making the move to a new house on the feast of Saint Michael the Archangel, September 29; the day also on which the University was re-opened. B.

and feet crossed; he standeth proudly drawn up with his cap on the very top on his head; for naught would he unbend himself; if he should have to enter by a door, being unwilling to stoop even ever so little, his cap would be knocked off from his head. *Noli extolli* Be humble, have done! hold not thy head so high; stoop thyself a little, lest thou knock thy head against the lintel of the door.

The fourth poison is negligence.

10. — Incline thyself not to negligence, O officer! Let pass dogs and the hunt, falcons and snares for birds, and nets, and hawks, and let pass walking idly abroad for thy diversion. Stay among them, that they be not dissolute. Keep them bound in dread, that they do not evil, that they restrain themselves while you are with them. And let not the sheep wander far from thee, for if thou dost suffer them to do so, they will come to harm. O how much of all this doth belong to those who have the care of souls! For they should be ever among their folk, admonishing them, beseeching them, threatening them, in all that wherein there is need of this.

The fifth poison is ignorance.

11. The fifth poison is ignorance. Give no office to him if he know not how to fulfil it. He doth merit it not, he is cipher. What is the worth of a cipher, O mathematician? In itself, naught. The cipher can avail naught without company. If thou place here a cipher with one before it, it doth make ten; if thou place next this another cipher, it maketh one hundred. If thou have an office and be cipher, thou wilt never accomplish aught. If then thou have an office and be cipher, take a companion, and then thou availest somewhat. Now pay heed to this example: this also let the women learn. Have you never seen when the seed of the melon is planted, or, better, when grain is sown, or now when figs are ripe, that scarecrows are set up there? As thou knowest, over there in the wheat-field they take a sack and fill it with straw, in order that the crows may not come there. And upon this sack they put a gourd, to seem like a man's head; and they make him arms, and put a bow in his hand, bent, so that it seemeth he doth shoot at the crows. And the crows are cunning, and they fly hither and thither; and seeing this man they fear lest they may be killed, and so they wait all day, without

pecking. They return thither the next day, and see him still in that same manner ; again they wait thus until evening without daring to peck in the sown ground, and again, out of their great desire to peck they return thither the next morning, and they find him in that selfsame posture as on the day before ; and seeing that he doth move himself not at all, they commence to fly down to the ground, though afar off, but by little and little they commence to draw near to this gourd, and at times they approach very near to it, though fearfully however. At times when they have thus approached near there will come a puff of wind, which will frighten them away. When they see him move in this manner, they all fly away for fear. Then seeing that he doth make no further motion, they even return and eat, and approach him nearer than they did at first. Sometimes it doth befall that they are one bolder than another, that they go even very, very near, and seeing that he doth not move, they begin to fly ; and they fly and perch upon his bow, and seeing that he doth not move, and doth not shoot off the bow, he hath no fear whatsoever ; and so emboldened he perch eth upon his head and doth piss on it. Now cometh the point. Knowest thou what I mean to say ? I mean to say that ofttimes a rector doth in like manner, who entereth that office to which he hath been elected, and he is not fitted for it, since he is a cipher. He doth proclaim the mandate that no one shall blaspheme God, that you must not go abroad at night, that you must game not for money, that you must not bear arms, that you must not speak any manner of abuse one to another. And thus, when the mandate hath been proclaimed, they go making a search by day and by night, with his bailiffs ; and ofttimes he doth find one who goeth abroad at night, and one who doth blaspheme God. He will be led to the magistrate to make him pay the penalty. Straightway some one will come to the rector: — O sire, I beg and pray a boon of you. You have such an one, who was found abroad at night ; I pray you to pardon him, for my love. Oh ! saith the rector, the statutes declare so and so. What ! Did he not hear the proclamation ? Doth he not know our customs ? Saith the other: Oh ! it is a custom to proclaim the mandate and so is it also

a custom to grant such pardons. He scarce knoweth how to deny this, and so he doth set him at liberty. So is it in the case of one who doth blaspheme, and in like manner of one who doth stir up a quarrel. And thus by little and little he doth permit himself to judge, according to the prayers of him who doth desire the pardon. Knowest thou what I say to thee ? Thou art a wretched cipher, and thou wilt never be honoured, for seeing of what kind thou art, they will presume so far, that finally in the end they will mock thee, and they will piss upon thy head. Oh, official, look to it that thy head be not pissed upon !

XX. *How and what we should ask of God.*

Whosoever asketh should ask that which is useful.

1. — Whosoever asketh should ask that which is useful. We are speaking now of prayer, and most timely doth it thus befall, since this morning you are preparing your urns. You must see to it that Mass be sung this morning up there above in the Council Hall, and you must make a prayer to God in suchwise that it may be directed into these three paths; that is to say, that it may avail to the safety of souls with faith and perseverance, because our prayer extendeth not to one alone but to the entire city.

We must ask of God that he send peace and concord among all the citizens.

2. — Let each one ask of God grace for love of Jesus, notwithstanding that thou beest a sinner. And because we have all need of the grace of God, we must all ask it, you, o men, as well as you, women; and therefore I say that you should tell your sons and your daughters to recite five Paternosters and five Ave Marias while the ballots are being taken, to the end that the good God shall send hither unity and concord among all the citizens, and that he may put it into the hearts of those who have this to do, to do that thing which shall be above all to the glory of God and the safety of their souls, and shall be good and useful to this our entire city. This is little forsooth to recite, for you might recite them in the morning while you are here before the sermon doth commence, and in this manner you will have profit of that time, because perchance there are some who were used before to waste it.

Of a friar who prayed only with his lips.

3. — If thou pray only with thy lips, it will avail thee naught. Hearken, I would tell thee what befell one of our friars. One of our friars was praying with his lips alone, not having his heart in anything of that which he was saying; hence while he was praying in this fashion the

head of a dog appeared to him, which moved its mouth as he did, signifying that his prayer was no better than a dog that moved its mouth. As thou knowest, when thou sayest the Ave Maria or the Paternoster not having heart therein, thou doest precisely as a dog that moveth its mouth. In like manner do I say to thee who dost recite the office, or friar, or priest, or religious whatsoever, if thou have not heart therein, thou availest naught.

The best hour to pray which there is in the entire day, is the morning.

4. — Before three o' clock is the time in which it is good to pray. At every time it is good to pray, but the morning is better than any other hour, and I will show thee some reasons therefor. Because of this hath the Church ordained that Mass be said in the morning, with the amount prescribed of the divine office, wherein grace is asked for the whole day. Why the morning more than all the rest of the day? Why, forsooth? Because in the morning the mind is quiet, and we complain not of weariness from the day that is past. We have reposed through the night, and being free from passion our thoughts can be lifted up to God better than during the day, and most of all can they be lifted up thither towards the break of day, and of this we are speaking. And if thou shouldst wish to comprehend why that hour is the most fitting, Holy Church is our witness that in that same hour she hath received greater grace from God than at any other time wherein she hath prayed. A second reason wherefore this time of the morning is a more fitting hour than any other of the day: seest thou not that when the sun doth rise then the savage beasts, wolves, foxes, and other beasts, likewise many such birds as are great owls, little sprites, screech owls, and other horrid birds, do forthwith lie full low, — when they see the light straightway they seek darkness, and therein they do shroud themselves? They are like to demons. The demons have more power at night than by day; I mean because of the sun of the illumination which God doth give to the soul. And why dost thou believe that the temptations of the night are more in number than those of the day? Solely for this reason, because they have more power at night than by day, which doth signify that the sun of grace doth cause the soul to incline more towards God than doth night.

XXI. *How we must ask of God that he may teach us to do his will.*

1. — Every one hath two angels at watch; one of these is good, the other is bad. And thou knowest that in the morning while thou liest in bed or art risen and about the house, and the bell doth ring for the preaching, the good angel saith: Go to the sermon. Ofttimes when thou sleepest, and the bell doth ring. he waketh thee that thou mayest come to Mass and to the sermon. Peace! thou shalt hear anon. O women, what think you of this hour for preaching? As for me, I say that it doth please me excellently well, that it is a rare mouthful snatched from the devil; it raineth not, it is not cold nor hot, and there is not wind. It is a pleasure in spite of the devil. I confess willingly that I grow fat thereby, and I weigh more by a pound after I have preached than before.

This time of day for preaching is a rare mouthful snatched from the devil.

2. — The flesh is ever in opposition to the spirit, and the spirit to the flesh. There hath ever been this opposition between them. But the soul is that which doth incline one or the other to virtue or to vice. Hence, if the soul be virtuous, not lacking in virtue it will accustom the body to good practices. Hearken, I have bethought me of an example to the point, touching one who followed a good custom. He had made this a custom, which he practised, to say the divine office. I can not tell you, however, what led him to such a habit. But one day having been busied about many things he forgot to recite compline. That evening he doth betake himself to bed, as he was used to do. There he lieth an hour, two hours; he falleth not asleep; three hours doth he wait, yet he cannot sleep. He commen-

Of one who could not fall asleep, because he had not said his office as he was wont to do.

ceth to consider : O what doth this signify? This is something which doth rarely befall me. And so considering he marvelled greatly, for he was used when he was come to bed, straightway to fall asleep. Finally, considering and reflecting thus, he doth recall to his mind this, that he had not said compline. Straightway doth he arise up, and he said compline and then returned to bed; he was not sooner under the sheets than he commenced to snore. Who then could it have been who brought it about that he should not sleep? It may have been his angel, or even God, or even the very force of this habit of his; for it doth seem that the soul cannot be at rest if it performeth not that which it is used to do.

If thou doest to the praise and glory of God that which thou dost do, every deed doth profit thee.

3. — A sage and beautiful maiden and of good parentage, such wishest thou for thy wife? Is this thy will? Knowest thou what I do say to thee? That which is suited to thee is a young woman of parentage like to thine own. And how many young men and maidens alike are there who would have a fair dowry, with great parentage, with goodness and virtue in the maiden, and who would have her sage, and beautiful, and of noble birth! But if thou dost regard thyself what thou art, it doth beseem thee to take a young woman of parentage like to thine own, and I say the same of her likewise. And this is praiseworthy and seemly. Other things there are as well which are seemly and fitting. O woman, hast thou a husband? It is seemly that thou shouldst mend him, when thou seest his hose ripped. Hast thou the will to do this? It is a seemly thing to do. When his clothes are soiled, it is seemly to make them white and clean, and to give them to him as he needeth to shift. When he lacketh a shirt, ready willingness to make others for him is fitting. So in like manner do I say, when thou hast a young little child, and he doth weep, do thou take him up. Is there need that thou shouldst unswaddle him? See to it that so thou dost do. If there be need to suckle him, suckle him; this is seemly. When he hath sleep upon him, so that he doth cry, thou shouldst also lull him to sleep. When it is needful to make him clean, then shouldst thou do this. All these things show becoming willingness, and when thou dost put such willing-

ness into practice, then dost thou neither merit nor dost thou sin. O what then! I merit not in caring for my husband and my child, who are God' s creatures? No, for thou dost merit naught, if thou intend not above all the pleasing of God. If thy intention be towards God so that thou dost that which thou doest to his praise and glory, then everything doth profit thee. And hence thou mayest ever merit if thou thyself care for thy household, and thy children, and thy house; having above all intention towards God and that what thou dost may be to his honour and glory, straightway thou dost merit.

If the life of the friars be so pleasant, then one thing is a great marvel, that more folk enter it not, to live so in ease and rest.

4. — Say these labourers: it is we forsooth who endure labour and toil. We suffer so much that we are like martyrs all the year. At it, at it, at it! — and we never know rest or repose. If the sun be hot it doth scorch us, and willy nilly must we suffer it, in reaping, or threshing, or in gathering in the harvest. In winter, likewise now in snow, now in cold, now in wind; and did we not so, the harvest could not be gathered in. Hold, hold! you shall have an answer to this! And is it one alone who doth speak so? Nay I believe, in faith, that I shall answer many, rather, in saying that which I wish to say. If this be so pleasant a life as you say, and if we do find so great pleasure therein, one thing maketh me to marvel greatly, that more folk come not to live so in ease and rest. I see but few who snatch at this morsel.

Of a country fellow who wished to make trial of the religious life but did soon forsake it.

5. — There was a man near a place of ours, who went very often to talk with our friars there, and among other words that he let fall, he said at one time: I know not who fare better than you, assigning his reasons therefor, and saying: we go forth to work now with the hoe and now with the spade; in cold, in heat, in wind, in snow, in hail, in storm; and all the year do we toil and still we lack, and we never lay up aught; for we suffer woe and fatigue, and we purchase as well with great toil the bread and wine that we consume. You stay here in ease; now you read, now you write, Now it is warm, and you seek the shade; now it waxeth cold, and you seek the fire. You live in delight, in the best way in the world. If you wish bread, you have it every day, and fresh; so likewise wine, and all that of which you

have need. When he had said thus what he wished to say, saith the Guardian to him: Wouldst thou endure the labour that is ours, while we endure that which thou must endure, and so thou shalt see which hath in it more delight? Said the country fellow: Right willingly. Saith the Guardian: Well, be it so! Which shall we agree first to make trial of? thine or ours? He doth reply: Let us make trial first of yours. Saith the friar: To it, then! Come forthwith, and we will commence this evening, and make trial of it thou for eight days. He is well pleased and contented. In the evening doth he come to the order, and they gave him supper. He supped upon that which they gave him. Then he was brought to sleep, all clad, upon a sack full of straw, as they sleep, and over it there was naught but a coarse quilt, and this perchance was full of fleas. That night, at midnight, they come and knock at his room at the same hour with the other friars. Up! up! to Matins! O comrade, arise! He doth arise up and goeth into church with the others. The Guardian gave him a pair of beads, saying to him: thou knowest not the office, stand here, and thou shalt say the beads while that we are busied in saying Matins. *Domine, labia mea aperies.*[1] This fellow was not used to keep awake, he commenceth to sway forwards. Saith the friar: Stand up, brother, stand up, fall not asleep! He doth awake, dazed, and commenceth anew to say the beads. Within a little he doth sway backwards, and the beads fall from his hand. Saith the friar: Stand up, fye upon thee! Say the beads, see how they have fallen out of thy hand! Take them up! In sum, he had to be wakened many times while they were saying matins, and they had scarce finished when he said: Oh, do you so every night? He doth reply: This we must do always, every night. Said the peasant: By the Gospel, I'll come here no more, not I! And so in one night had he more than enough of the delights of the life we lead; and he arose up on his feet and said: Open the door for me, for I wish to get away from this! And notwithstanding that he did that good he could not profit thereby, because he did it not out of love of

[1] « Lord, thou shalt open my lips ».

God : not having regard to God naught can avail to a good purpose.

See that thou enforcest not the body to suffer more than it can endure.

6. — Thou canst not please God without labour. Do as I shall tell thee: strive not with over great zeal. Attemper the lute. Every time that thou wouldst enforce thy body to suffer devout exercise in whatsoever fashion, see that thou enforce it not to suffer more than it can endure. That thou shouldst enforce thy body to more than it can endure is not the will of God, because he doth not demand from us more than we have power to endure. Saint Augustine, who devised his rule in the most perfect precision, doth require that this rule for religious orders be observed by those who can observe it. Say not that it is impossible to observe it, for therein thou liest; it can be observed, but not by all. The rule of Saint Augustine doth require that thou fast in respect of that which is possible, and as long as thou canst; and when thou canst no longer endure, thou art no longer bound thereto. In like manner I tell you of the rule of Saint Francis; there are those who say : it is so strict that no one can obey it, — what think you of this, pray? They wear no tunic, they touch not money ! Oh, fool that thou art ! I say to thee that those who made the rules for these religious orders, did so with the uttermost discretion, and all their observances it is possible to keep them. And every time thou dost say that it cannot be kept thou dost blaspheme God before all, and thou dost say evil of the Saint who made this rule, and thou dost blaspheme Holy Church, who hath confirmed and approved the rule. I speak of those which have been approved by Holy Church. It is true that our rule doth require that thou wear only one tunic alone, but it doth add thereto another sentence, wherein it saith: *secundum tempus et loca* according to the season and the place wherein thou art. If it be a cold country, thou mayest put on as many garments as are needful so that thou freeze not; and thou mayest even wear also a mantle over the tunic and the habit. In like manner are you yourselves accustomed to do. When you have not as many clothes as suffice, you put on more of them. If thou say: the order doth require that they go barefoot, I could not go in this manner in winter, — also this is ordained with regard

to the place and the season, and the condition of the particular person: if he be old, so that the heat doth not return anew to his body, full well thou knowest that he cannot do as a young man. For thy saying: Oh, they may not touch money! — this is true, neither old nor young may touch money, in any place whatsoever. But I ask thee, what need have we of money? Why should we suffer such a burden? I believe, in faith, there was never any one of you who touched so much of it that he ate thereof in order to live better in respect of his food. Methinks that neither seculars nor friars ever eat money. For myself I say I never ate any, nor do I think that any of you have done so. And what need is there of money if a man may have that of which he hath need? For me, I have no need thereof; it is enough for me that I have those things which are bought with money. If thou wouldst speak of our manner of sleeping, — ah this is what thou canst not understand! Oh, this is indeed healthful, to sleep clad! Wilt thou have proof thereof? Is there any woman here who doth itch? Boys, is there no one here who hath the itch? Ofttimes when I think thereon I laugh my fill, in faith, in my sleeve. Hearken! I would teach you to cure yourselves of the itch. Wishest thou to be cured? Sleep fully clad, and sleep without a shirt, and if thou shalt do thus, I promise thee thou shalt never need to go to the Baths of Petriuolo nor to Maciareto. Wilt thou have witness thereof? Not one of our religious that ever I have seen has ever had the itch. Hast thou understood me? And hence I say to thee, that he who hath made the rules shaped them with discretion, and it is possible to observe them.

How Friar Bernardine was threatened by a man, who through too great abstinence, had lost his wits.

7. — There have been many who have wished to enter eternal life at a single bound and a leap. And many times have such as these found themselves crazed thereby; because through too great abstinence they have then lost their wits, as befell one man, whom I think you know. I wish not to name him, — but this befell him for no other reason than this of too great abstinence; he fasted so much that he waxed mad. And I was ordered that I should keep him in the convent, and I kept him, and knowest thou what befell one time? That while I was standing there in

talk with a friar, and this man was behind the door, — precisely in thiswise — with a bar in his hand, and I perceived this not, because I had turned my back on him, — my companion chanced to turn his face towards him. And when he raised the bar aloft, which was like a corbel, my companion stooped to the ground. It was the will of God that the blow arrived not to me either. He came within the door, and when he came to himself he asked me, saying: Wert thou afeard? I replied and said the truth, that is, that never had I felt greater fear, and that verily it was the greatest fear I had ever felt. This I say came from naught else than from too great penance; and therefore do I say, that too much doth overflow.

How Friar Bernardine was tempted to go into a hermitage, and how then he overcame this temptation.

8. — Women, O women, because it happened to me once to feel so great fervour as this I may tell you somewhat concerning it; and I would tell you of the first miracle that I ever performed, and this befell before I was a friar. There came to me the will to live like an angel; I do not say like a man. Lo! Hearken now to this, and may God bless you! The thought came to me that I would live on water and grass, and I bethought me that I would go to live in a wood, and I commenced to say within myself: What wilt thou do in a wood? What wilt thou eat? So I replied to myself within me: that is a good way which the holy fathers followed. I will eat grass when I am hungry, and when I shall be thirsty I will drink water. And so I determined to do; and in order to live according to the will of God I determined also to buy a Bible, that I might read, and a cover to keep over it. And I bought the Bible, and I went to buy a piece of leather, of chamois skin, that water might not soak in at the sides of the book, so that the Bible should not be wet. And I cast about in my thoughts where I might lodge, and I determined to go to look about me, near Massa; and when I was in the Valley of Boccheggiano, I went about staring up first at this hill and then at that one, and saying within me: Oh, here is a good place to be! Oh, there it will be even better! In sum, not arriving at any decision, I returned to Siena and thought that I would commence to make trial of the life that I wished to practise. And I went out there beyond the Porta

Follonica, [1] and I commenced to gather a salad of sow-thistle and other herbs, and I had neither bread, nor salt, nor oil; and I said: let us commence the first time washing it and scraping it and the next time it will suffice to scrape it without cleansing it otherwise; and when we shall be more accustomed thereto we will do without washing it, and at length we shall do without gathering it. And in the name of blessed Jesus I commenced with a mouthful of sow-thistle, and putting it into my mouth, I commenced to chew it. Chew, and chew, it would not go down! Not being able to swallow it, I said: Oh, now I have found the way! Let us commence by taking a draught of water. Marry! down went the water, and the sow-thistle stayed there in my mouth. Finally I took many a draught of water to one mouthful of sow-thistle, and yet could I not swallow it. With one mouthful of sow-thistle I rid myself of all temptation, — for in truth I know now that it was a temptation. What followed afterwards upon this was by election not through temptation. Oh, how must a man weigh and consider before he follow those inclinations which sometimes result in so great evil, and yet seem so good! Hence said Bernard: *Non semper credendum est bonae voluntati* trust not to every good inclination, nay, — but those saints of old as in the time of the holy fathers, how then did they do? They forsooth lived on grass. I reply to thee: *Distingue tempora et concordabis scripturas.* Distinguish the times. Knowest thou not that what the Saints did, thou canst not do? Behold Saint Francis! How prithee was he able to fast for forty days, wherein he never once ate? He could do so, I should not be able to do so, not I. And I say to thee that verily I have no wish to do so, nor would I that God should give me such a wish. So likewise I say to you of Saint Peter, — knowest thou not that he walked upon the water as we walk upon land? In faith I would never trust myself there! Therefore, wish not to do that which thou mayest

[1] This gate was near the church of *San Giovanni in Pantaneto,* in that part of the wall which was torn down when the convent of San Francesco was included in the city proper at the desire of Pius II, who stayed there for some time in 1410. An old fountain with three arches, now in a very dilapidated condition, keeps the name of the gate.

know upon reflection thou canst not do; for in truth even though thou hast the will to do, thou wilt die thereof.

It is not fitting that thou shouldst impose upon the spirit a heavier penance than it is able to endure.

9. — Lo! Great penance at a single bound is pretentious. Knowest thou what doth come from presumption? As thou knowest from a woman to whom a good impulse shall come of a sudden; she will say: I intend to recite every day a thousand Paternosters and a thousand Ave Marias, and she will recite them for three days, and then this doth vex her. And she will say: I wish to recite them with more devotion, but to recite fewer of them; I will say five hundred. And so it will go perchance for eight days. And again at the end of eight days these will seem to her too many, and she will betake herself to one hundred each day, — oh! other duties increase in number, and the devotions go, — I know not how or whither. Knowest thou what such an one as this hath done? She hath made a goose's flight! She maketh a great noise, and in the end she hath done naught. And therefore is it better that thou shouldst choose thy penance with discretion and not with presumption; for if thou shalt act with presumption, then when thou wouldst act again with discretion, thou wilt not be able to do so well as thou shalt desire to do.

Of the Nicolaites and of those evil folk who follow the most indecent practices in the world.

10. — A soul which is well disposed doth not willingly venture herself lightly into every depth of waters; she will go forward warily and with the uttermost caution, lest that the good inclination that she hath be a temptation. Knowest thou what God saith to such as these? Go, read it in the Second Chapter of the Apocalypse: *Odisti facta Nicolaitarum, quae et ego odi* thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaites, which I also hate, To tell thee more concerning this Nicolas, this Nicolas was a deacon, and received the Holy Ghost with the others, who were Apostles; and when he had received the Holy Ghost, he was entrusted with the care of the widows. He had a wife and she was very beautiful, and he thought of no other God than his wife. The other servants of God becoming aware of this, admonished him that in this manner he did ill. He, to excuse himself, said that it was not true, and to show that he spoke the truth he said that whosoever wished his wife might take her. Thus was it said and done; she was beautiful of body and was young, and

there were other young men, who took her, and most willingly; and thus she had a greater burden to bear than she should have. And knowest thou what this Nicolas did then, in order to inspire greater belief and trust thereby? He commenced to say that wives should be common among men. Hearing this, a doctor of the same kind as those of Grosseto said: *Omnia communia praeter muglim* [1] Let all be held in common, except the wife. Oh, of what an awful thing, and terrible, do I now bethink me! There is even here among us a place where they follow this cursed practice which I will tell thee of: in the early hours of the night they gather together, men and women in one place, and stir themselves round together in a broth; and they have a light, and when it seemeth to them the moment to extinguish this, they do so, and then one falleth to another as chance will have it. Ou, ou, ou! Hearken to this curse which hath thus entered and fallen upon the land. And there are such folk as these here in Piedmont, [2] and ere this five inquisitors there were who went thither to rid it of this curse, and they were put to death by these wicked people. And no longer can there be found any inquisitor who will consent to go thither to have to do with the matter. And knowest thou how such as these are called? They are called Folk of the Keg. And this name deriveth from this, that at a certain time of year they will take a young little boy child and throw it from one to another among them, so that it is killed thereby. Then being dead they pound it into powder, and put this powder into a keg, and then from this keg they give to drink to each one, and this they do because they say that then it will not be possible for them to reveal any of those practices which they perform. We have a friar in our order, who was once one of them, and he hath related the whole unto me, and verily they follow the most indecent practices that I believe could ever be performed. And therefore I have somewhat to say unto you, women, and lay it up in your minds: if

[1] See footnote, p. 88.
The Saint heightens the effect of irony by this grammatical error.

[2] He alludes here to the sect of the Waldensians, established in the Val d'Aosta since the thirteenth century.

ever you may know that a man hath been of that ribald crew, and he should say to you in regard of whatsoever occasion hath been or ever might be, even the humanity of Christ, and in the name of this should say that he wished to see you all naked, know you that which you must do? Cry out: To the fire with him, to the fire! And stay not there in the least way, lest somewhat should befall thee thereby. [1] Ah me, if you lose your chastity, how are you bereft? Naught hath the woman more precious than this. Be on your guard therefore to preserve it.

[1] This recommendation by Saint Bernardine, and many more which are to be found in his sermons, but which out of regard for certain readers, we do not publish, bear testimony to the horrible corruptness of the time, which was general, and which took advantage even of the religious sentiment of the people.

XXII. *Doth still treat of how we ought to ask of God that he teach us to do his will.*

See to it that thou dost attach thyself to the better in preference to the good.

1. — Every time that these three come before thee, good, better, and best, if it be possible to thee, attach thyself always to the best. If thou canst not have the best, see that thou dost attach thyself then to the better before the good. This is what God doth wish that we should do, and this alone, in order that we may all become virtuous men. This is the will of God, that thou seek ever the most perfect manner of life, and practices the best that thou canst find; being able to have them all three, if one doth cost thee no more than another, *caeteris paribus*, attach thyself always to the best, because if thou dost attach thyself to the good, if then thou dost go forward to the better, and finally to the best, so thou must go from better to better. [1]

How Friar Bernardine doth confess neither man nor woman, occupying himself solely with the labour of preaching.

2. — For me, I have rejoiced in this practice for many years. I have endured this labour of preaching now for many a year, and I have found it always the worthiest and best of all labours that I have ever endured; and I have wished to leave for it every other duty. I never do confess either man or woman, and I busy myself about naught else than sowing the word of God, and I hold this practice to be the best; for I perceive that wishing to do many things, I do no one of them well. Saith Solomon: *Non sint in multis actus tui*. See that thou busy not thyself about many things. And therefore do I endeavour to practise this one alone.

[1] I. e., by stages, which you would be spared, if you seized at once upon the best and highest.

Friar Bernardine cannot do all that which doth belong to the Bishop or to the Nobles, or to the Officials of the Tribunal.

3. — Oho! Ofttimes when that I am alone by myself, there overcometh me again and again the desire to laugh my fill, — so that if any were with me then he would think it a great marvel. I find that if any one hath a quarrel of whatsoever kind, they betake themselves to me saying to me: Hearken, friar Bernardine, I pray you for the love of God that you do me a kindness: there is a dispute between such an one and such another, and you might do well indeed bringing them into accord. Well, say I, what wouldst thou have me to do? I would that you would send after him. But I have no servants, nor have I bailiffs, to force him to come hither, and perchance he will not wish to do aught else than as it pleaseth him. Tush! This is not a matter for me. There will come another, who perchance hath quarrelled with his wife, saying to me: for the love of God, bring it about for me that there may be peace between her and me. Another: I am owed money by such a man; he doth insult me, he mocketh me, he keepeth back from me perforce that which is mine, while I live in want. Well, what dost thou wish that I should do in regard of it? I am not the Governor nor the Captain, I am not one of the Nobles, nor an official of the Tribunal, so that I may force him to pay if thou hast money owed to thee. In like manner, if a son be chased out of the house by his father, it is to me he doth come; if the father be ill-treated by the son, he doth betake himself to me. If a wife hath been driven away by her husband, she betaketh herself to me. If a woman hath fled from her husband, the husband cometh to me. If a man hath any infirmity, he hath recourse to me; if he be in any tribulation, he betaketh himself to me; and in faith I hear from you the most wonderful tales, that ever I have heard in any place whatsoever. And ofttimes there will come to me such as would tell me that which is in sum but a vain trifle, and they begin the story a thousand miles back. One day a little time ago a foreigner came to me, and he seemed to me a man of but little intelligence, though in his own esteem this was not so; and approaching me, he said: Sire, God grant you happiness. You are right welcome. What news? I would have thy counsel? Utter thy whole wish, said I.

He commenceth then and saith: The truth is this, that we have a priest in our church, and he is not pleasing to us. We turned him out, and we have taken another one, of whom we understand that he is excommunicated; hence I would ask that you send to him to come to you, and that you admonish him, I mean that you correct him of his fault. I replied to this man that I am not the bishop, that I can neither admonish him nor correct him. He replied and said to me: To me it doth seem that you are bishop, and pope, and emperor. And verily I do believe in respect of this which he said to me that he said it in good faith. And this which you do here in regard of me, it is done likewise in every other place whither I chance to go. Know you what I have to say to you? You would have me pope, and bishop, and rector, and official of the Tribunal, and that I performed all those offices which belong unto these. Oh, I cannot do all things, not I! Let each one perform his own office! If money be owed to thee, go there whither thou shouldst go in order to recover thy money. If thy wife hath left thee, or thy husband, settle this matter with the help of thy kinsmen or thy friends, or with thy father, and *sic de singulis* say I to each one of you. Knowest thou wherefore? Because one is fitted to one office, and one to another, and when it is needful thou shouldst go to the bishop, do not come to seek me, for I can not be of aid in this affair of thine. When thou shouldst go to the Nobles, do not come to me, for here again I can do naught for thee; go thou therefore to them. And thus I say to everyone of you; because that you should come to seek me is a wasting of that time in which I might be busied in study and in devising a sermon to the magnificence and the honour of God; and you are occasion wherefore I can not study, since I must stay to listen to you. And therefore I ask of each one of you that you pardon me, since I do this with the best intention, and to that end which is the best of those three which I told thee of.

It is not a reasonable thing for a merchant to leave his wife and his family for two years or for three.

4. — Now I wish that we should consider facts. A merchant who doth depart from his house, and doth go forth and leave his wife and his family, and shall remain abroad ofttimes two years, and doth leave a young wife, in doing

this doth he seem to thee to do well? In faith, no! Oh, this is not permitted to thee! The reason is this, that you were given one to the other, in order that they should remain together while that there should be life in one or in both. Moreover, if they remain apart, naught can come of this but bad example; they may thereby live in fornication. Banish, therefore even the thought of such a thing. Knowest thou what I say to thee, Woman? If thy husband be abroad, see that thou endeavour to enforce him to return to thee; write to him, send to him messages in suchwise that thou shalt stir up in him the wish to return; be not without him; and if he be unwilling to return, go thither where he is, forsooth. If thou sayest: Oh, I am not troubled therefor, — Oh, then this is indeed a bad sign. Thus thou showest that thou art seeking after another. Hence do I wish most heartily that thou remain with him, and he with thee. Nay, I speak not of eight days, or of two weeks, or even of a month, but to stay two years, or three, this is not according to reason, and not being according to reason, it is displeasing to God. Also, moreover, this is not a reasonable thing in thee, thou who givest thy vote in the palace, if thou give it in suchwise that for one who is not fitted to an office thou dost give the white ballot, and for one who is fitted thereto thou dost give the black one; and this is displeasing to God, and thou art bound to answer therefor. Ay me! how many do the ballots ruin!

Of certain people who believed it was possible to go to the Holy Sepulchre by land, and who were imprisoned.

5. — Again it is not reasonable to put into practice such thoughts as come to thee if thou reason not with thyself in regard of them, since moreover they are not pleasing to God. Further there are so many cursed temptations which lead thee finally into evil. O women! If these men were not here present, I would tell you somewhat of such as do beguile you with their words, and you perceive it not, and you are guided by what they say, and you are beguiled. For ofttimes there come such deceivers, such hypocrites, as thou knowest, such hermits [1] as say: Such and such a thing will come to pass; in such a way must you

[1] Used here ironically to mean those who are austere in outward appearance only.

do; and they represent one thing as another, and so do they deceive many. Hearken. Twelve years ago perchance there was a man at Fermo who came forth out of a wood who made people believe in his tales and his foolery, drawing many people to him, saying that one day they should go to the Holy Sepulchre by land. And when the time seemed to him come, then he made them strip themselves all naked, men and women, and they set forth on their way, and went towards Fermo. When people saw this company they commenced to say: O what meaneth this? What novelty is this? What do you intend, doing in this manner? They replied: We intend to go to the sea, and when we shall have arrived there, the sea will part itself and we shall enter therein and go to Jerusalem without ever wetting our feet in the water. When this tale came to the ears of Sire Lewis, the Lord of Fermo, he had them all imprisoned.[1] Such things are not pleasing to God, because they are not according to reason.

How the devil appeared to Friar Rufino in the form of one crucified.

6. — How many women there are who say: Oh, last night there came to me a beautiful vision! I saw such and such a thing, and it foretold unto me that I should have such and such a thing. Another woman saith: The Virgin Mary appeared to me. Saith another: An angel appeared to me. Saith another: And to me the moon appeared. Another: the sun. Another: A star, in my bedchamber, which was all illumined with it. Knowest thou what I say to thee? This is all madness which hath crazed thy brain, or if be in truth somewhat, it is that from which evil will come to thee if thou know not how to guard thyself from it. Knowest thou why? Because in my opinion thou art not better than was friar Rufino, companion of Saint Francis, to whom the devil appeared in the form of one crucified, and said to him: In regard of this thy Francis, be assured that he is a hypocrite. This friar Rufino forsooth was a holy man, and so well did this cursed devil know how to order the matter that his fervour for Saint Francis began to diminish; and this vision came to him very many times. Saint Francis perceived the changed manner of this friar, and going to him he

[1] The same story is told by Ser Antonio di Niccolò, the chronicler of Fermo.

asked him the reason thereof, and finally he said to him: Hast thou never had a vision? He not wishing to tell him, he asked him very many times, again and again. In the end he told him that he had had a most glorious vision. Saint Francis asking what this had been, he said that the crucifix had spoken to him. Saint Francis knowing within himself what this had been said to him: Alas! believe it not, for it will bring thee into evil, since it is the devil. Aye, in faith! the devil can take upon himself the form of a crucifix.[1] — Oh, he never departed from above the cross in the time of Christ! — he was not however upon the cross of Christ himself. And instructing this friar he said: Knowest thou how thou must do the next time that he comes again? Know then that humility is most hateful to him. See to it that when he doth appear to thee again thou dost spit in his face. If he be the devil, he will flee, and if he be God he will be glad thereof, thou having done this with right intention, and he will hold it for a good act; but if he be the devil, he will flee forthwith, since he hath not so great humility that he can endure to suffer any insult whatsoever. The friar did in this manner: once again he appeared to him forsooth in that selfsame form; straightway Friar Rufino spat in his face. Marry! When he had performed this act, that other departed forthwith, and left behind him there so terrible a stench that no one could endure to stay there. All that thing had he done solely to trick that friar. Therefore do I say to you: Consider well that which thou dost do, and when one vision or another cometh to thee, believe not with over-great readiness that which these visions reveal to thee; prove them before you believe!

[1] Here it is Saint Bernardine who speaks.

XXIII. *Of the twelve damsels whom the Virgin Mary had round about her.*

Mary had with her twelve damsels when the Angel saluted her.

1. — David speaking of the glorious Virgin Mary, speaks of her as he first seeth her, not as yet espoused. And David seeth that she was followed of many damsels, virgins in her company, as recordeth the forty-fourth psalm; and he saith that she doth lead them with her because she is the chief of all virgins. Many more virgins shall be brought after her.[1] This morning we must consider who those are who should be present with the Virgin Mary. I say that they must needs be virgins. Then we must consider the behaviour of the virgins, and let us see the behaviour of Mary, how Mary conducted herself when she heard the salutation of the angel; and learn this morning, O Virgins, what must be your behaviour before you marry. And before all we must consider how Mary a pure virgin without stain of sin, was accompanied with twelve virgins, whose abode had been always with her, and Mary performed naught which these virgins knew not of. Now would I tell you the name of each of all these, and that which belonged unto them to do, since that they stood never idle; they were always busied in the service of Mary.

The first damsel whom Mary had with her was My Lady Seclusion.

2. — The first damsel whom Mary had with her was My Lady Seclusion. She bore Mary so much love that she would never be parted from her, though she had the charge of the door. Mary had agreed with her and had said to her: knowest thou how thou must do if any one whatsoever

[1] « After her shall virgins be brought ». Psalm XLIV.

shall ever knock at the door? See that thou goest never to open unto him without that thou dost first tell me it, and see that thou dost ask first who is there. If it be a man, hearken how thou must do then: take thy stand here at the window, — for she had a little window like this one of the Signoria here [1] or that of the Governor, so that she might see others without being herself seen, — and even if thou descend, open not the door, — open the wicket in thiswise; if it be a woman, ask what she would have, to the end that we be not beguiled. And this rule she always kept in regard of whosoever came thither. And that it was fact you may know from this, that when the Angel Gabriel arrived, he knocked, and My Lady Seclusion ran in haste to the window, and seeing him asked: Who is there? And straightway drawing in her head she hastened to Mary and said: Some one hath knocked at the door, and he seemeth to me to be an angel. Then said Mary: Go, and open unto him; And when it had been opened unto him, straightway she bowed her head, in order that her face might not be seen. And therefore said the Evangelist: *Et ingressus Angelus ad eam dixit*: *Ave gratia plena: Dominus tecum*: And the Angel being come in said unto her: Hail full of Grace: the Lord is with thee. O maidens! learn how you must conduct yourselves at home, and how you must be upon your guard in respect of him who doth enter therein; for thou seest that the Virgin Mary stayed shut within her house, and would always see first who wished to enter there, and would know that which he wished. Maidens, you know not how strong and overwhelming are the desires of youth! There is naught better than to keep within doors, and not to have to do with men, or even with women.

Intimacy of young men with maidens can never have in it aught of good.

3. — Why are maidens unstable? Not being experienced in the things of the world, when they see a thing that is new, at once there cometh to them a longing for it, because all their feelings are stirred up with the desire thereof. And when they perceive and comprehend that which indeed it is, if it be somewhat belonging to the world,

[1] In some old pictures there is a window in the first floor of the *Palazzo Pubblico*, from which one might look out without being seen. To-day no trace of this remains.

straightway she goeth in pursuit of it; if she follow after it, she never will be good. Mark me, for I say that which is true. Wouldst thou do as I tell thee, O maiden? Oh, see to it, then that thou dost guard thyself from My Lady Domesticity. Speak thou to no one, let no one enter into thy bedchamber, and enter thou not into the bedchamber of another. O evil dost thou do, thou mother, to permit that she should visit in the houses of others, and make herself intimate there, for because of such intimacy thou shalt find her therefore big and monstrous great. Better far hadst thou done to bring her to the preaching. There where thou dost think that she is intimate, be on thy guard, for it is needful that thou shouldst do so. Hearken, I would tell you an example from nature. I see there a wild pig, which hath been brought hither into the city, and becoming used to see so many people it fleeth not away, as it was accustomed to do in the wood; and because of such intimacy with people, if a man should go to offer him somewhat, he would permit him to touch him and to scratch him, and you might do with him as you pleased. And this cometh solely from intimacy with those people whom he seeth every day. Now go thou to the wood, and coax thither one of those who dwell therein; when he shall see thee, forthwith will he flee from thee. Show him acorns and go towards him, it is yet worse. Call him, *Ciro, ciro!* Thou mayest well sing, for he will never wait for thee. To the same purpose: A maiden who looketh not to her behaviour as she should do, — who when she heareth a horse, doth straightway run to the window, who would see all and know everything, — be assured that very easily she may fall into dishonour. This My Lady Seclusion had a sister whose name was My Lady Bashfulness, and every day she was used to say to her: Let not thyself be seen by the men; betake thyself not to the window to look at those who play at ball, and wear short jerkins reaching only to the middle, and go not to listen to the sound of music when they do play or sing beneath thy window at daybreak. Betake thyself not to the windows by day or by night; stay not to listen when the young men climb up to the roof and throw up pebbles that they may talk with thee; go not thither at

any time. And there were always such words as these between these two sisters — Bashfulness and Domesticity. Hast thou taken my meaning? Thou wilt understand me even better anon.

The second of the damsels of Mary was my Lady Audience.

4. — The second of the damsels of Mary was My Lady Audience, who, when Seclusion had seen this angel, said that this was so; [1] and she went thither straightway to know what he wished, and the Angel told it to her, and Mary knew it forthwith. And to be assured that this was so, look at that which the Evangelist hath said: *Quae cum audisset* Who having heard. Knowest thou what this doth teach thee? It doth teach thee that thou shouldst stay to listen to those things which are good and holy, and helpful. To such things as these thou shouldst open thine ears; not so when thou hearest the young men who sing or make music, for they would willingly bring thee to shame and dishonour. When thou dost hear them, knowest thou what thou shouldst do? Flee away, and stay not to listen; for if thou shalt stay there thou shalt remain in great and open peril, because the mind of a maid doth waver, — it remaineth not firm, and then it doth befall that..... *et cetera.* Three persons are there whom thou shouldst stay to hearken to, O virgins, who have not husbands: first God, then thy father, and next thy mother. Let us commune with God. When thou sayest the Ave Maria alone without other prayers, with whom dost thou think thou speakest? Thou dost speak with the Virgin Mary, and in like manner, when thou sayest the Pater Noster, thou dost speak with the good Lord God. Knowest thou, that when thou dost salute the Virgin Mary, she doth forthwith salute thee. Think not that she is one of those unmannerly women of whom many are to be found; — far otherwise, she is all pleasant: she doth salute thee every evening when thou hearest the Ave Maria ring up there in the Duomo. Oh, wilt thou be so unmannerly that thou dost salute not her? If thou shalt salute her, forthwith she will respond to thee, and will converse with thee. Likewise speaking aloft to God, he as well will respond to thee and will converse

[1] I. e., that Seclusion had seen the Angel.

with thee. Second: Thou shouldst stay to hearken to thy father, and thou shouldst obey him; for he will never tell thee aught than that which will result in honour for thee, and which is useful as much in regard of God as of the world. The third person to whom thou shouldst hearken is thy mother; and this when she doth teach and train thee, saying to thee: Betake not thyself to the window, stay not to look at those who are so unseemly in their manner of playing at ball; stand not there to hear the singing of vain and idle songs; stay not to listen to the words of any man: lay not thy mind to aught else than to purity. Oh, purity is so noble a thing, my daughter! Mark me, and believe what I say, — do that which I say to you. Do that which she [1] doth dictate to thee.

Guard thyself, maiden, from those wicked women who do always endeavour to converse with thee when thy mother is not there present.

5. — Hearken, daughter, and see, and hear, and incline thine ears to that which I say to thee. Hear that which thou shouldst hear, and see that which thou shouldst see. Pay heed to that in which doth consist the safety of thy soul. Guard thyself from those wicked women when they come to seek thee at home, who endeavour always to converse with thee when thy mother is not there present. And the maiden who is not experienced in the things of the world, knoweth not these women as they are in truth, for she is pure and innocent, and without guile. Wouldst thou that I teach thee to know them? Be upon thy guard when anyone whatsoever cometh to thee at home, and pay heed to this which I shall say to thee. Commonly it is their custom to go when the mother is absent; this is their custom, and they carry on one arm a little basket, wherein they have certain little vials for anointing and for painting the face; and this is their manner: when she cometh thither she will sit down with thee, and she inquireth of thee in respect of thy mother, and where she is. Then she will set herself to gaze at thy face, and will observe too all thy person. And their habit is to say: Oh, how thou art unkempt! Thou dost clothe thyself indeed ill, and thy tresses are in great disorder; thou seemest in truth a wild beast, and methinks that thou dost pay little heed to thy appearance. Go to, go

[1] Purity.

to! See that thou be clad as beseemeth, that thou mayest appear that which thou indeed art. Thou art the most beautiful maid in this neighbourhood, and thou art neglected and disorderly like a sheep. And the maiden, who doth judge by these words alone, doth reply as she best can. The woman then doth arise up, and she saith to her: I would clothe and deck thee with mine own hands; and she doth assist her, and doth instruct her how to anoint herself and what the maiden doth of this, she doth praise. Oh, thou art beautiful! Thou dost seem to me the most beautiful maid whom I have ever seen! And she maketh her to dance with joy, for commonly maidens desire to be praised for their beauty. And when they have spoken together in this manner for a little, so that by means of their conversation they have grown intimate, then she doth commence to repeat messages; and first she doth demand that she be paid, with broken bits of silver, or with salt meat, or flour, or wine, or oil, or bread. Never will they depart if they have not somewhat to carry away; they endeavour always to rob. And then doth she commence to say to the maid: I have brought thee good tidings; there is one who doth wish well to thee more than any other in the world, out of true love. And they always have this « true love » on their lips. Know thou what thou shouldst do in regard of such as these? In like manner as did a certain maid, who when such a one set herself to talk in this manner, she buffeted her well with many blows. There was another who, when one of them had talked to her, the maiden summoned a whole troop of children and said to them: Go to the house of such a one, with this bunch of straw, and put it within the door. And she gave them a bunch of straw, and so was it done, and they burned her house for her. Oh, maiden! see that thou dost hearken and attend: [1] Stay not to listen to such as these, nor even to listen to any young man such as those who say ofttimes: I would say a word to thee, to thy profit, and it is somewhat which thou hast need to hear. Stay not ever to listen. Think you that I know not these practices? Yea; in faith, I know what

[1] I. e., to what I say to you.

Bertha spun. I have found myself ere this there where there have been such men as have said: If I can but speak with her, if I can but touch her hand, I shall prevail, so that she will consent. And I know that these speak truth; the manner of it I will not tell you, not I, for I wish not that you should learn it from me; for there are such as would practise it if they knew how, and hundreds of maidens have been dishonoured by these means. And the first word they say is this: I would speak with thee for the true love I bear thee. O the true love doth consist in this: in dishonouring thee, and thy father, and thy mother, and all thy parentage, thus blindfolding thine eyes so that thou darest never show thyself abroad. Dishonour and shame to thee, to thy father, to thy mother, to all thy family, and finally to the husband who shall be given to thee! Therefore be wise; hearken and attend, -- but not to everyone.

The third of the damsels of Mary was called My Lady Modesty.

6. — The third of the damsels of Mary was called My Lady Modesty. She was ever close beside Mary. Whensoever she heard a man speak, then in modesty she became red as fire, and was all troubled within for modesty. And hence said the Gospel, when the Angel had spoken to her in the form of a man: *et turbata est in sermone eius.*[1] When she heard the Angel speak, forthwith she was troubled. Pay heed to this: when a man is confused he doth blush. Likewise did Mary. Notwithstanding that he was an Angel, because she heard a voice as of a man, she said within herself: I have spoken ofttimes with angels, but never heard I that one spoke to me in a human voice. Take example by this, thou maiden, how thou shouldst act. Never speak to a man if that thy father or thy mother be not present. And thou, man, see that thou dost regard the honour of thy daughter: see to it that dishonour overtake thee not through her.

The fourth of the damsels of Mary was called My Lady Prudence.

7. — The fourth of the damsels of Mary was called My Lady Prudence. Oh, how sage was she! After that she had understood the words of the angel she commenced forthwith to consider: *Cogitabat qualis esset ista salutatio* She thought: what manner of salutation is this? As thou knowest he said

[1] She was troubled by his saying.

to her: *Ave gratia plena: Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus.* When this damsel had heard these words she spoke with Mary, saying: reply not yet to this, thou must needs consider this, for it is a thing of very great import. If thou dost promise, then thou must needs keep thy word. And so she reflected. If she had replied at once, she would not have done well to consent. Nor would she have done well to drive away the Angel, when she knew him to be such, so that she chose the best part, reflecting thereupon. Do not you as many do who will not bring their daughters to the sermon; saying that they wish not that they should hear many of those things which are said here in order that they may know how to guard themselves from sin, saying: they know not what is a sin! Ay me! for thou knowest not that which thou sayest. Wouldst thou rather she should fall into sin and commit it than know how to guard herself from it? Do not thus, I say; see to it that she shall know that from which she should guard herself, and it will not then be possible that thou shouldst err. If thou wilt not do so, great evil will befall thee therefrom. Go now, and keep her in pickle like the olive, or like walnuts, which are to be preserved; which the more often the water be changed, the sweeter doth it come off from them, and so the bitter departeth; and meseemeth that thou wouldst do contrariwise. If thou shalt do in this way, bitter water will always come off from her, because she will fall into sin and vice, not perceiving it. Thinkest thou however, that these are not sins for her because she doth know them not? It standeth not so. I say to thee that if thou doth frequent the sermon, thou shalt become sage and prudent and shalt know to keep thyself from sin. And so also I say to thee: thou wilt make thyself like to the dove and wilt not know how to do evil, because thou wilt keep thyself from it. How many admonitions dost thou learn if thou stay to hear the preaching! Thou wilt learn to speak sagely and to speak low, to speak little and to say what is good. When she doth marry teach her not to be a chatterer; for ofttimes doth it befall many women that their husbands love them not because of their too great chattering. Pay heed to this that if the woman speak little, and live modestly, her

husband will always love her. Oh! it is so useful a thing to live temperately in regard of customs and actions, and of virtues, that it is like something holy. Ah, this is to be seen in practice in respect of the officials, for one can not have speech with them after any careless fashion whatsoever. When thou dost enter there, then dost thou pass to one after another until that thou dost finally have speech with him. [1] Likewise is this true of the holy father: whensoever one doth wish to speak with the holy father, he is shut within, so that before you may arrive where he is thou must speak to many. Thou dost arrive at the first door, and dost make it known, [2] and thou shalt wait a while ere that thou dost pass to the second; and thus doth the will to see him grow stronger within thee: and then when thou dost pass on to the second the will to pass beyond this doth grow yet stronger; finally thou dost arrive at the third, and in this manner through the will which groweth ever stronger within thee, thou dost enter in to the holy father, and arrived there, thou hast far greater reverence for him than thou wouldst have had hadst thou gone thither without having felt any longing whatsoever, and had found all the doors open. In this manner he is esteemed. So do I say of the Rulers. Thou seest that here are doors, and when thou hast entered here thou goest up higher, and thou must wait before another door, and in this manner are they esteemed. Tell me this: O if the Rulers should stand up there by the Fountain [3] where stand the labourers who wait to be hired, or as the porters stand there, in what esteem should we hold them?

The fifth damsel was My Lady Timidity.

8. — The fifth is called My Lady Timidity. She did not so as do many shameless bold ones; when they hear a word spoken outside, they run straightway to the window to see who speaketh. Not so did she do; rather when she saw the Angel, who had the face of a man, forthwith timidity overcame her with fear, that not alone she wished not to speak to him, but moreover she could not look at him in the face; and seeing this the Angel straightway said to her:

[1] The official whom you were seeking.
[2] I. e., make known the request for an audience.
[3] See footnote 1, p. 82.

Ne timeas, Maria. Fear not, Mary. Oh, what a thing it is to reflect that she should have feared, who had lived ever in the service of God! This is a witness that we ought to have the fear of God within us and outside. O maiden, every time that thou shalt have the fear of God within thee, thou wilt tremble with fear when thou shalt see a man, because she who hath turned her thoughts to God, wishing to preserve her holy virginity, will tremble every time that she shall see a man, notwithstanding that her thought be stable.

The sixth damsel who was with Mary was called My Lady Purity.

9. — The sixth damsel who was with Mary was called My Lady Purity. Whosoever had beheld her and had remarked her gaze, and the manner of her movements and of her speech, her demeanour in all things, would have seen her so pure in every way that it was a marvellous thing. Thinkest thou perchance that she decked herself out as you do? No. As God had made her, so she was. Dost thou recall to thy mind how Esther did, who did never endeavour to seem more beautiful to King Assuerus than in truth she was? She did not as you do, all you women, who can not be called with truth honest, since you are dishonest. And mark me, — if you do grow still worse in four years or six than you have become in two years since I last came hither, you will not do so to the close of ten years. Do you know why? Because you will not be able,[1] for I fear, I fear, I fear, lest it befall you as it hath ofttimes befallen many; and as I said to you the other day in regard of large sleeves, so do I now say to you of the tabards, since that wearing these not only do you not seem to me decent women, but you seem like female soldiers. And knowest thou what will come of this? That of one of your tabards they[2] will be able to make two, and they will serve very well; from the middle upwards it will serve for a page, and it will not need to be altered in anywise, and from the middle downwards it will serve the master, and there will be need only to fit it to him a little. I shall not remain always with you, for I shall have departed, and I shall be

[1] Because you will be overtaken by some dreadful judgment before ten years shall have passed.

[2] I. e., Soldiers of the enemy, who will be sent as a judgment.

far away, and I shall say: I foretold it clearly to my Sienese, men and women, and I was not believed. Thou seeing that it hath indeed overtaken thee, thou wilt be here and wilt say: Friar Bernardine told me of it, and we did not wish to believe him, and it hath befallen in very truth as he foretold to us, and even worse.

The seventh damsel, companion of the Virgin Mary, was My Lady Diligence.

10. — The seventh damsel, companion of the Virgin Mary, was My Lady Diligence. She kept all the home in order, and that service which she performed she did perform with so much love, and so much orderliness that when she ate she ate in the appointed order, and so it was even to her sleeping; everything she did at the time ordained. Learn, O maiden, to do that which thou hast to do, according to order, and with love. If thou hast to spin, or to cook, or to sweep, or to clean the household belongings, O all that which thou hast to do, do it with diligence. Wouldst thou that I should teach thee how to know who is fitted to do well, and hath some little grain of good sense? Hearken, by three things thou shalt know her; first by laughter, in showing her teeth; when thou seest a man or a woman whose custom it is to laugh riotously with wide, gaping mouth, and showing all her teeth, be assured that she is mad. Moreover thou shalt know them by their manner of walking, because they go with head up, in faith, as thou goest, at random. Also the manner of their dress doth reveal it to thee. If thou dost see a man or a woman decked in such crazy fashion, or with such extravagant fooleries as we see, reflect that in like manner is her head crazed and foolish, as they show outwardly in their bearing. And as thou dost perceive foolery in their outward garments, reflect therefore that their hearts within are all full of vain and empty clucking. Hast thou never seen such of these women as wear a monstrous head-dress? As thou seest the screech-owl, so are these, their heads are like the head of the owl. For what is the screech-owl good? It is good precisely at this time to allure the redbreasts, which are snared in this season. In like manner do these women who wear a monstrous head, like an owl; they allure the young men! Thou knowest that when thou dost set the screech-owl upon the hedge, all the birds range themselves round

about to look at it, and it looketh at them, and they perceive not that they are snared and limed. So likewise in precisely this same manner do these young men; they go round and round these young women who have so monstrous a head. They go round and round, and finally they are snared in the lime of their own wantonness.

The eighth damsel who was with Mary was My Lady Virginity.

11. -- The eighth damsel who was with Mary was My Lady Virginity. She was ever with Mary. If Mary walked about, then Virginity walked with her; if she read, then did Virginity likewise so, with her. In whatsoever Mary did Virginity was with her; and because she used not to be with others, therefore she said those words to the Angel: *Quoniam virum non cognosco.* How shall this be done which thou sayest, because I know not man, and I am not disposed ever to know one. For should I give birth even to the Son of God through knowing man, yet should I not be disposed to consent thereto in order not to lose my Virginity. I have given it for ever to God, and I will preserve it ever for him, for I wish not ever to give birth, nor to be a mother in anywise whatsoever. How well did they converse together the Angel and Mary! O virgins, know you this, that while you retain your Virginity you are ever accompanied with Angels. Not so is it with her who is married, and is joined in matrimony. Knowest thou not that the merit of the Virgin it is said is one hundred, and the merit of the married woman thirty, and of the widow sixty? Seest thou by how much the Virgin doth exceed the other estates? O Virgins be wise to maintain yourselves as you are; flee the sight of man!

The ninth of the companions of the Virgin Mary was My Lady Obedience.

12. — The ninth of the other companions of the Virgin Mary was My Lady Obedience. She having understood the words of the Angel, since it seemed to her that these accorded with that which she wished should be, — that is to say, that the virginity of Mary should still be preserved, — said to Mary: determine to be contented since God hath sent thee this Angel; reply to him forthwith, and say unto him that so thou art contented, and well disposed to the will of God. O maiden, when thy father or thy mother doth command thee, or thy grandmother, or even thine

aunt, see to it in regard of what-soever be commanded unto thee that this thou dost willingly perform.

The tenth damsel with whom Mary was accompanied was called My Lady Humility.

13. — The tenth damsel with whom Mary was accompanied, was called My Lady Humility, and this it was which won the love of God for Mary. And Mary commenced to sing with great jovousness and devotion and humility: *Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae; ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.* Behold, if I consent thereto, all generations will call me blessed. O wherefore will they call me blessed? Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid. And then she turned to the Angel with her intention towards God: *Ecce ancilla Domini* Behold the handmaid of the good Lord God. Oh, how much would there be to say concerning this part of it! Thou father, and mother, keep thou thy daughter like a little drudge. Is the house to be swept? Yes. Yes? Make her to sweep it. Are the bowls and the platters to be washed? Make her to wash them! Are the clothes to be sought out for the washing. Make her to seek them out, — make her to do so. Is the washing to be done? Make her to do it, within the house. Oh, but there is the maid servant. This may be; but make her to work, not because there is need thereof, but to keep her busied. Make her to tend the children, to wash the swaddling bands, and all else; if thou practice her not in all such work, she will become a great heap of fleshly thoughts. Keep her not in ease, I say. If thou shalt keep her busied, she will not wait at the windows, she will not be giddy-pated, with now one thing and now somewhat new in her head. Oh, labour is useful! Knowest thou what thou shalt make thus of her? It will come about that she will do for thee all that of which there is need in the house.

The eleventh damsel is called My Lady Longing.

14. — The eleventh damsel is called My Lady Longing. Always with very great longing and desire did she perform every work which she had to do to the glory and honour of God. In like manner I say that thou shouldst do. Be desirous of work, even when there is no need thereof for thee thyself, and when thou canst, be desirous also to give somewhat in alms to the poor and needy. Not having aught to give him, do so much at least, that when

thou dost see a poor beggar in rags thou dost mend him: and make them garments; if thou hast somewhat of thine, give unto them; if thou hast naught, have at least the desire to give willingly. Have desire to do willingly all those things which may be to the honour and glory of God. Take thought for the prisoners, poor creatures, for this is one of the seven works of mercy. O women, for the love of God take thought for these poor unfortunate prisoners; and in the name of God I recommend them to your charity.

The last companion of the glorious Virgin Mary was My Lady Faith.

15. — The twelfth and last companion of the glorious Virgin Mary was My Lady Faith. She had so great faith that she believed all things were possible which God wished. *Omnia opera eius in fide:* All her works were done in faith. And therefore she said to the Angel: *Secundum verbum tuum.* I am well content with the manner thou hast told me of, and I consent in no other manner. And so follow this example thou, maiden, and believe in thy father, and be contented with that which he doth command unto thee, and obey him always.

XXIV. *Of Saint Francis.*

Of a vision which blessed Peter the Comb-Merchant.

1. — Hast thou never heard that which blessed Peter the Comb-Merchant said? If thou knowest it not, I would tell it thee, and go thou to see, there at his tomb. He was used at that time to go to matins at the Duomo, and he used to go there to listen, and this was here at Siena. He saw two angels with two torches in their hands, and entering inside he saw no other than Christ at the altar, and in the open space he saw tracks as if in ashes. Waiting a little he saw people come on foot, barefoot, who were placing their feet there where the footprints of Christ were. Then after these came saints of old, and they likewise endeavoured to put their feet into these footprints; and by reason of the many footprints of those who passed there, the first footprints were well nigh effaced. Then behind them all he saw little poor Francis, who placed his feet precisely where Christ had placed his, so that hardly could the prints of his be seen. And this was solely because he showed himself to be so close a follower of God that there could be found no one who had followed in the footprints of Christ so much as he.

Saint Francis was so possessed of purity that it was a wonderful thing.

2. — Saint Francis was so possessed of purity that they say and maintain that to him was granted the first innocence, as Adam was before he sinned. And wherefore this is to be believed, let us see the reason. How may it be known? It is said that if Adam had not sinned, every beast, every bird, would have obeyed him, and all the elements, water, air, fire, earth, the fruits, the plants, the fishes, and in like manner every created thing. Likewise he would have received such grace from God that never

Sano di Pietro - Saint Bernardine preaching in the Piazza di San Francesco

would he have been subject to headache, nor to the gravel, nor to a stitch into the side, nor to fevers, nor to any of those maladies which we suffer every day. And because he sinned, every thing rebelled against him and he became subject to all these ills. As thou seest, now if a stone doth fall upon a man it doth injure him, which then[1] would not have hurt him. In like manner, going upon water, he may drown, and then he could not have drowned. So if anyone then had entered fire, it could not have roasted him, and now it would burn him utterly. In like manner if a mountain had fallen atop of him, it would not have hurt him, whereas now it would smother him. The air could not have hurt him, being either hot or cold; and if Adam had returned to that former state, the same graces would have been granted again to him; all the elements would have been obedient to him, all the fishes, all the birds, all the animals, all the beasts; wine, water, grass, and all things. He, Saint Francis, had these graces, hence we may suppose that he had that same innocence which Adam had before he sinned. He had power over air, over land, over fire, and over water. Freezing cold water was put around him, and it did not seem to him freezing. Likewise, to speak further of water, at one time having a very great thirst upon him, he threw himself to the ground off from the little ass on which he was riding, and it was revealed to him, he being in prayer, that he should go to a stone which there was near by, and he had water in abundance. Also we have it, he had such power over water that he made it become wine: *Vinum non habent;* and this miracle was done openly before many of his friars, while he was in Fermo. Moreover we have it that in Apulia he went up into a boat, and went to preach in another place, and the little boat returned wholly of itself. Herein mayest thou see how great power he had over the water. We have it that at one time in Lombardy passing by along the road the air being very dark like night, he had so great power that he caused a very great brightness beyond belief, by means of the power given him by God. Likewise had he power over fire, for

[1] I. e., in that former state, before the sin of Adam.

its heat could not harm him. At another time we have it that his sight being weak, there was laid on his brow redhot iron, and it pained him not. Further, concerning the fishes, we have it that when he spoke they stayed to listen, and so likewise the birds. We have it that down there towards Rome, at Todi, while he was preaching, the noise of the swallows was troublesome to him, and he ordered that they be quiet, and so they obeyed and stayed to listen to him. Moreover we have it that once a hare fleeing before the dogs, sought safety in the bosom of Saint Francis, and after that they had passed on he let it go away. And hereby thou seest that the elements and the beasts and the birds obeyed him.

Of the miracles that Saint Francis performed.

3. — Well might Saint Francis have said: I am a man wise indeed. But whosoever doth read of his deeds, if he will consider him, he will say that he was the most winning of all men we read of. He knew how to find the sweetest words in the world; from this we see that his wisdom was not human, but divine. Thou hast it that once as he walked he was seen like to a glowing furnace; go, look for this among his miracles! Further, I recall one to my mind, that before he renounced the world, he saw a palace with five windows, which formed his name; and moreover a mountain appeared, which was all burning. When Francis reflected on the deeds of Christ, he fixed his thoughts so upon this Christ that he had naught else in his mind. When he put on this habit for the love of Christ, he wished to have it worn with some sign that should show the love that he bore him. He made this garment as you make a large cope. Thou seest that it is made like a cross; for since he had within himself Christ crucified, so therefore he wished to wear the cross as his habit, for love of him.

Of the way in which the wounds were given to Saint Francis.

4. — Let us see the way in which the wounds of Christ were given to Saint Francis, and the reason: Christ appeared to him at this time with six wings, wishing thus to show to Saint Francis of the life that he was leading that this was very pleasing to him. Two wings he had extending aloft signifying the two wings that he had towards God; two other wings encircling him himself and two others

extending towards his neighbour; with these six wings he was so pleasing to God that he glowed wholly with charity and with love. Those two above, which showed that he had always intention towards God, these he fluttered continuously, saying: *Latum mandatum tuum nimis.* Great and bountiful is thy commandment, and thinking upon this he was so transformed that he was almost united to God in a unifying transformation. *Quae non licet homini loqui.* It is not permitted to man to speak thereof; rather may you prove it than speak aught of it. Deemest thou that they spoke together? Hast thou seen him there at home [1] in the Chapter House? I know not who painted him there, but he who painted him, verily he did reflect excellently well before that he painted him. He drew him in such a way that he doth seem in truth to be out of himself, and all trasformed in God. Look at him for a little, at his mouth, and that which it doth reveal to thee. Oh, how pleasing do I find that aspect of his, for verily herein is shown how he believed in the love of God. Two other wings had he in the middle, signifying the love that he bore his neighbour, — ever instructing him, ever admonishing, and praying that he ought to guard himself from sin and follow the will of God, giving always glory and honour to him. His thought of God was all of his passion, his thought of himself was of his own salvation; of his neighbour he thought to instruct him that they should give praise to God; and by means of these six wings he was transformed into Christ crucified.

[1] In the friary of « The Osservanza ».

XXV. *How God is to be feared.*

Pray that Friar Cudgel come not to preach.

1. — O fellow-citizens, open your eyes, for God hath sent lightnings which should enlighten you: since that you perceive the truth, beware, beware, I say to you, lest that another time he send upon you the lightnings and the thunder together; for if thou wilt help thyself in that wherein thou canst, thou shalt be saved. Help thyself, and God will help thee. Know that God desireth not thy ruin, but thy conversion delighteth him. Return then to God. Other preachers there are also who come to a people, who come not with lightnings apart from thunder, but rather together with the thunder. Ofttimes they come with the noise of bombardes. Ay me! be upon your guard, for the love of God: pray God for safety, for I promise you that there is need of prayer; for if the lightning and the thunder come together, it will go ill with you. Alas! seek your safety betimes. Hearken to this my sermon in which I show you wherein lieth safety. And I would have you to know that there is a place in Italy where there are gathered together at a sermon thirty or forty thousand people at one time; and knowest thou the name of that preacher? He is called Friar Cudgel. Oh, he is a great preacher in those parts! So fearful am I because of your deeds, that I tremble with fear lest it may go ill with you. Know ye wherefore? Because I see you in evident and open peril; and in order that ye may be able to help yourselves and willing, I will show you to-morrow that you are in greater peril than was ever any people. And if I fail to make thee believe, say that I dream. In very truth you may say to me: Friar Bernardine, thou dreamest and dost talk at random; and perchance there may

be one who will say so; and I shall say that it is you rather who do dream. I must not remain here; I shall depart from you, and when I shall leave I shall go singing like as the Germans weep; and out of the fear I have for you and the love I bear you, I shall have my ears ever pricked up when I hear news of Siena, because of the fear that I feel for you. And when I shall depart, I shall carry away with me, because of this, a bosom all filled with sorrow and with sighs, from my fear lest evil overtake you. Know you wherefore? Because I fear lest another preacher may come to you! Alas, woe is me! for of this I have so great fear, that I am wholly troubled within myself! Knowest thou what he is called? He is called Friar Mazica,[1] and hath a great following among those inclined as you are; and he hath so great profit of his sermons, that here at Siena it can scarce be believed.

Because of peace for so long and because of great abundance, Siena hath fallen into five sins, for which she will in truth be punished.

2. — To whom do I speak, O women? To whom do I speak? Ay me! I speak to my Sienese. Alas! woe is me, could you but see within my heart, I speak to you out of so great tenderness and so much in love that seeing within it, you must needs believe this. I grieve so in regard of you, because I am indeed one of you, and I see that you lack the wisdom to maintain your liberty. Alas! let us speak thereof for a little. For how long a time have you enjoyed this liberty in Siena? for so long: — Good. And what hath this liberty produced? And reflect first before you reply to me, so that you may reply according to reason. Saith this man: there is abundance, and to spare; our vineyards are fertile, and our fields, and we till our farms excellently well. We have cattle, and because of this peace that prevaileth, we keep them. I ask of thee again, another time: The wealth that thou hast, by what means hast thou acquired it? Knowest thou how to reply to me? The chief reason I will tell thee. Solely because of the peace that hath prevailed are thy vineyards tilled and hast thou wine in abundance. In like manner the farms being tilled have yielded you corn in abundance and other grain. Wherefore

[1] Saint Bernardine derives *Mazica* perhaps from *Mazza* « Club », as earlier he has several times referred to *Frate Bastone*. It is clear that here he alludes to the sudden descent upon them of some band of Adventurers, who would sack the city.

are they tilled? Solely because of the peace that you have enjoyed. The cattle that have so multiplied for you, what hath been the cause of this? Peace, and peace alone. Knowest thou not that war is the cause wherefore these things are scattered and wasted? And who hath granted this peace to thee? God, in order that thou shouldst use it better than thou dost use it to-day. Who hath given so great wealth into thy hands? So great an abundance of oil, of wine, of meat, of corn, of oats, and of all good things? Knowest thou not it is from him? Oh, it is an evil sign when a man is ungrateful for the benefits he hath received! But there is that which is still worse, — when that which he hath given unto thee, thou dost use it and possess it in sin and in disorder. Thou hast abundance of goods and thou dost employ it all in vanities and in sinfulness. For first the sin of gluttony doth reveal itself in magnificent and disorderly feasting. And of thee was said: *Quorum Deus venter est* Their God is their belly; for they think they do naught but what is good, sending their money down their throats. O Siena, thy prosperity thou thyself hast commenced to endanger! Stop to consider thy practices, — already hast thou let fall the fly of suspicion into thy food. Reflect, and thou shalt see that I speak truly. I say that God having given thee riches and having granted thee peace, thou dost fill up thy throat, and from gluttony thou wilt pass to worse sin; for through this excess thou dost next fall into vanities and wantonness, and when thou hast gathered together much wealth, forthwith thou dost fall into the sin of pride. Seest thou that man who doth hold office? And I, why am I not deserving of this as much as he? In faith I am as fain of it as he! And when thou hast arrived at this point, and thou dost note him who hath that office which thou didst desire, and thou hast not been able to have it, then forthwith thou dost fall into the fifth vice; that is to say, into anger, for thou dost perceive that thou canst not help thyself to this.[1] Thou seest that man exalted as much as thou thyself, or more, and thou dost bear him hatred, so that willingly thou wouldst beat him; and into

[1] I. e.; to this office.

this thou hast fallen through not knowing how to use well thy goods, having prosperity. But wait yet a little! O women, tell me: if you should put the scum which you have lifted from the broth-pot into another pot, and should put this then upon the fire, think you that this water would be pure and good? It will be the foulest mess that you did ever see. Worse, again: if thou shouldst lift the scum, when the broth-pot doth boil and bubble, and put it into the part that is seething, thou wouldst see the vilest and foulest mess that thou didst ever see. Would God that you may never prove this, and may never have the will to do so. Pay heed to this which I would tell you. Seest thou a land which hath lived for long in peace, — and then cometh war? O how many things might be shown to be the occasion of it? Lappets, and tabards, trailing gowns, garlands, acorns of silver, stripes of many colours, your silvern gewgaws; puffs which drag the wings of your pendant sleeves to the ground; your slippers, without speaking of many other such vanities. What think you doth become of these things when there is war? They are sold, and are given for that which can be had, and so little is to be had for them, that they are, as it were, thrown away. Then indeed is the boiling broth-pot skimmed! Ah me! these vanities which you have, I fear, I fear, lest they may cost you dear! O do we not see that evil fortune must overtake you? Is there any woman who doth not wish to wear on her head a rose garland with acorns in it, with silver and with other vain gewgaws? Make them, prithee, and make them in abundance, for I promise thee that they shall serve excellently well to make tabards for the soldiers! Woe is me, but only thinking thereon I am consumed with grief. Thou payest not heed to the justice of God, to that which it doth permit. For if he send thee his scourge, thou shalt be taxed, and these taxes thou shalt be obliged to pay them; and if thou have goods, thou shalt be forced to give them up; and thy prosperity shall fail and shall diminish for thee, and thou shalt be obliged to sell and to pledge. Hast thou made ill use of thy goods? Yes, and now thou shalt use them no longer, ill or well, for they shall be taken from thee. I say not that this sin alone shall be punished but as many as

thou hast committed of these all shall be expiated. Woe is me! Dost thou think that the sin of wantonness in every dishonest manner in which thou hast committed it, shall not be punished? Yea, verily. I speak not of the manner in which thou dost bear thyself in church. Alas! In church do you not reflect how displeasing this must be to God? Do you not reflect that when you despise so the good Lord God, it doth seem you trouble yourselves little in regard of him? This one doth laugh, another doth make a sign, another doth say some mockery, and another doth sing. Woe is me! for everything that you do so in your vanity, you do it in despite of God and of the Virgin Mary, and of all the saints who are in the realm of glory! You know that that[1] is called the house of the Virgin Mary; so then, she doth receive you into her house; and you are guilty of this ribaldry! *Timete Deum, Timete Deum;* if not, already hath evil overtaken thee. I have said to thee, I say it, and I shall say it, and so have other preachers said even the apostles themselves, God will punish all sins that are committed. And therefore have I said to thee, Siena, that by reason of so long peace, and so great abundance and fertility, thou hast fallen into five sins, for which, await that thou shalt assuredly be punished.

Be afraid lest so great a burden be laid upon thee that thou shalt be made to pine away in want.

3. — And there is another penalty to be here spoken of. What penalty will this be? Oh, well do I know what it is! Like the man who beat his wife with a sack, he did this to kill her. Knowest thou what is meant thereby? It is meant that he will wish that you die a daily death. Knowest thou how any can die a daily death? O I would show thee an example of this. If thou hadst a lizard, and shouldst put a heavy weight atop of it, and shouldst make it to stay under that weight, which is so great that it can not move, yet it doth not die, but doth live so long in this manner until that it doth pine away. Oh, this then is a daily death! I tear so much, I fear so much lest you may die such a death, that I am utterly possessed with fear, and out of the great sorrow that I feel therefor, I can not do otherwise than warn you of it. Alas! pay heed to my

[1] The Duomo.

words. Ah me! note, note, note, and be afraid lest this may happen also to thee; lest so great a burden be laid upon thee that thou mayest be made to pine away; lest thy possessions may be wasted; lest thy body come to harm, because you have not had patience one with another; lest thy name suffer thereby, for some one may say: he who will do in this manner or in that, doth well merit this evil fortune; and that finally even thy soul may come to harm, and worst of all lest the devils carry it away thither where is the beginning and the middle and the end of all evil. If thou be not ware now when thou canst, it will befall thee as saith Isaiah, in the third chapter: *Exactores eius expoliaverunt eum* Those who were sent have despoiled him. Knowest thou who are these? They are the messengers who were sent to the houses to collect the taxes, and the other sums that must be paid, which perforce will be had from you: and they despoil the house of all its cloth, of the beds, and of all that they find there. If thou read further, thou shalt see: *expoliaverunt eum* And they have despoiled it even of him: that is to say that sometimes the bailiffs seize the head of the house in order to force him to pay that which hath been imposed upon him; and not being able to pay it, he is cast into prison, and there doth he pine away. Moreover the soldiers also have plundered him, who have entered into their houses, and have carried off their possessions so that they have left you naught; for they have sacked it even to the door, even to the rafters have they burned and destroyed it with fire. Worse, finding no one who shall defend those goods, they band themselves together, and often times those are utterly plundered who have denied themselves always more and more to gain those possessions.

The wicked will wish to die, and death will flee from them.

4. — And when these things shall befall, that doth no one know save God alone: to him alone is it permitted to know it, and he wisheth not that any other should know it. If thou wishest that the time should approach presently, O woman, see that thou dost injure none of thy garments: for the time must needs come forsooth, doing as thou dost do. See that Friar Cudgel doth find them all clean and orderly; because he will wish them for those that he will

lead with him. Oh, how many malcontents will there be, how many wicked, and how many punished in worse ways. The very worst will despair, and will pray for death, recalling to their minds this time now present; for they will say: if we had but believed that which was said to us, we should not have fallen so upon evil days. And they will perceive that they are in great want, so that they will desire death, as to-day there are many who desire death for themselves and for others, because of not having considered what may happen to them. Oh, woe is me! for then shalt thou find thyself in truth in hunger, and when thou shalt have the desire to eat, thou shalt not have whereof to eat; so too, woe! when thou shalt see thy young children fall there upon the ground dead from hunger; thou shalt see thy young daughters torn from thee and violated before thy eyes, and thou shalt not be able to speak a word; in like manner shalt thou see thine own wife torn from thee and violated and defiled, and it will behoove thee to be silent; likewise shalt thou see thy little sons taken by the feet, and their heads dashed against the wall; thou shalt see thy mother seized and disembowelled in thy sight, so too of thy brothers, ofttimes discord doth arise between brothers here among you, and one will kill the other, — when those who shall remain shall see these things, they will pray for death, and death will fly them, and finally they will be taken and will be cast into prison and will be delivered into the hands of those who will cause them to pine and waste away, and who will endeavour by little and little to have their possessions; and once having these, they will prey also upon the body which shall be almost wasted away. These things that I have told you of, — were they never done in any place? Ye-e-e-s! And why were they done? Wholly out of the justice of God, in order that whosoever hath committed a sin may be punished therefor in this world, and then afterwards in the other. And if some good men shall endure such pain and woe, or sorrow, or hunger, or death, by these will that suffering be diminished which they would have endured in the other world.

XXVI. *Of the Scourges of God.*

Because of the sin of blasphemy God will send his scourges to Siena.

1. — Would God it might not befall that a fearful judgment should overtake you because of your sin, for I know well that you have blasphemed and that daily you do blaspeme God and the saints. Your land will be laid waste and fire will light upon this your city, Siena, and your country will fall under the rule of the enemy and will be sacked of all the good things that shall be found therein: then will it be desolate of those who dwelt there, and abandoned by those who were used to till it, and the soldiers will possess it, and the daughter of Sion will be like unto an empty shadow, like unto the vine when it is stripped of its fruit. God will say: Until now have I used oil, I have allured thee by sweet promises in order that thou shouldst turn to me: now shalt thou stand in greater peril than thou hast ever been, for now shalt thou become like unto the phantom of a vine. Knowest thou not that after the vintage there doth remain only the phantom of the vine? So will it be with thy vines; they will become like unto phantoms, since because of the wars it shall not have been possible to till the vineyards, and though they shall be tilled, yet will they be plundered of their fruit. The soldiers will leave your houses without floors or windows or doors; here will lie a house half in ruins; of another the beams of one ceiling will have fallen to the ground, of yet another the beams of every ceiling. O how then shall she [1] be called when she shall be so devastated? She shall be called a phantom. Mark me! Hast thou seen that when they build the little hut for the man

[1] Siena.

who guards the melons, it is always in truth a habitable shelter while that there are melons; but when these are gone, then doth it stand there like a hovel. Ah, citizen, give heed to him who hath seen such things with his own eyes! I have happened upon a place in the world which because of the wars waged there had been abandoned, so that there were left but three or four friars; and there dwell the wild beasts as if there had always been a forest there: the place which before was inhabited by so many men of high estate, now the wild beasts inhabit it. Alas, woe is me! City of Siena, beware! right well thou mayest beware. When the house of thy neighbour is afire, hast thou never heard these words: Hasten thou with water to thine own? O my fellow citizens, have you not eyes? If you have them, open them then a little! O city of Siena, open thine eyes, and amend thyself now so far as thou art able, so that thou mayest not become like a hovel or like a phantom. Enough! I would have this suffice now in regard of the sin of blasphemy. How is this sermon called, O women? This is called the sermon in regard of the truth.

The first to feel the strokes of the scourges of God will be those who have trusted in charms and followed them.

2. — Another sin which derives from pride is the sin in regard of charms and of divinations, and because of this God many times doth send his scourges into cities. Once before I know well that I spoke of this, and I said so much thereof that he who heard and he who comprehended must needs have been possessed with fear; for I spoke so plainly and clearly thereof that I believe there remained naught to be said in regard of it. Here is one who doth measure by a span with the palm, another with briefs, another with charms, another with sorceries, another with divinations; and there are such as have betaken themselves to the enchanter and to the diviner if they shall have been robbed of five pence. Knowest thou that which thou hast done? Thou hast caused men to renounce God, and thou hast caused the devil to be adored. Ay me, ay me! The Lord of Heaven and Earth hath been debased, and to think that the devil is adored through so great iniquity. And this man saith: I know not how the matter may be, forsooth; I find that the truth hath been told to me. And I say to thee in reply that thou perceivest not how thou hast

been deceived, and that one thing hath been presented to thee for another. Alas! you who are so blinded, have you never comprehended his snares and deceits, how he hath always deceived us, and hath exerted himself so to do? Go, seek in the beginning of Genesis, when he commenced to tempt and to deceive Eve and Adam, how persuading them to break the commandment of God, he said: *Eritis sicut Dei, scientes bonum et malum* You shall be as gods, and you shall know good and evil, if you shall eat thereof; so that thereby he made them to fall. O thou who hast recourse to lots, how great evil doest thou, and how many there are of those who have trusted in them and followed them! How well they teach thee the truth! And have they never told thee aught because of which thou mayest perceive that they do lie? Nor yet even because of this hast thou been willing to forsake them? Woe unto thee! O thou who hast recourse to the charm of the three good friars, how great evil dost thou do! O thou who hast recourse to the charm of the misshapen cripple, [1] to thee, and to him or to her who doth say that she is bewitched, and who maketh thee to believe that she is so, – to all these I say, take heed! for the first to feel the strokes from the scourges of God will be those who have trusted in these enchantments, and followed them, and next will vengeance overtake those who have not brought them to justice. Hast thou never noted in the Old Testament how God condemned this? Solely because it was displeasing to God, and this he made plain and clear. Know thou that she or he who doth say that she hath power to break a charm, doth know as well, be assured, how to work one. When such as these say that they wish to cure anyone, know ye what ye should do? Naught better is there to do than to cry: to the fire, to the fire! Woe is me! O know ye not what there was done at Rome while I preached there? O would that I might bring it about that here too this might come to pass! Come, let us offer a little incense here at Siena to the Lord God. I wish to relate that which befell at Rome.

[1] A reference to the different ways in which they pretended to work charms.

Of a witch at Rome who had killed thirty children or thereabouts by sucking their blood.

3. — I having preached of these charms and of witches and of sorceries, it seemed to them as if I dreamed all this of which I spoke. Finally it came into my mind to say that whatsoever person knowing a man or a woman who he knew did any such things as these, if he did not accuse them would himself be guilty of the selfsame sin. And after I had preached, there was accused a multitude of witches and enchanters. And because of the very great number of those accused, there came to me the guardian,[1] and said to me: Know you not that one and all are going to the flames? I ask him: What then? What is this, what is this? A great number of men and women have been accused. Finally, seeing how the matter stood, he took counsel with the Pope, and it was determined that the most important of these women should be taken into custody, that is to say those who had done worst. And there was taken among others one who told and confessed, without being put to torture, that she had killed thirty children or thereabouts, by sucking their blood; and she said also that she had let sixty go free; and she said that every time she let one of them go free she must sacrifice a limb to the devil, and she used to offer the limb of an animal; and she had continued for a long time doing in thiswise. And yet more she confessed, saying that she had killed her own little son, and had made a powder of him, which she gave people to eat in these practices of hers. And because it seemed beyond belief that any creature could have done so many wicked things, they wished to prove whether this was indeed true. Finally it was asked of her whom she had killed. She told who these were, and whose children they were, and in what way, and when she had killed them. And going thither they sought the proof from the father of those children who had been killed. Hadst thou ever a little son, who at such a time began to pine away, and then died? Finally, since he replied that this was so, and since the day and the hour and the manner in which this had come to pass all agreed, so it was shown to be nor more nor less than as she said. And she told how she used

[1] Of the monastery.

to go before dawn up into the Piazza of Saint Peter's, and there she had certain jars of unguents made of herbs which were gathered on the feast of Saint John, and on the feast of the Ascension. Thou [1] knowest this, thou dost comprehend me? Art thou here present? Are there here perchance as well even some of those cursed ones who are in league with the devil? [2] Finally these [3] came into my hands, and when I put them to my nose, they stank with so foul a stench that they seemed in truth to be of the devil, as they were. And they said that with these they anointed themselves, and when they were anointed in thiswise they seemed to be cats, and it was not so, for their bodies did not change into another form, but it seemed to them that they did. At length she was condemned to be burned at the stake, and was burned, so that nothing of her remained but her ashes.

Accuse thou straightway before the Inquisitor every witch, every wizard, every sorcerer, and sorceress.

4. — There was also another one taken who confessed that she had done like deeds, and she as well was condemned to be burned, and she died in another manner; for she was not strangled before she was put upon the pyre, and the fire was kindled there while she was alive, and naught more was seen of her but her ashes. And as was done with them so should the same be done wherever one of them is found. And therefore I would give you this caution, and I warn you that wheresoever one may be, and whosoever may know of one, or know her, in any place whatsoever within [4] or outside, straightway accuse her before the Inquisitor: whether in the city or in the confines without the walls, accuse her, every witch, every wizard, every sorcerer, or sorceress, or worker of charms and spells. Do that which I tell thee in order that thou be not called upon to answer for it on the day of judgment, having been able to prevent so great an evil, which might have been prevented if thou hadst accused her. Again I say to you another thing, that if any man or woman shall be accused of such things and if any person shall go then

[1] Here he addresses a witch.
[2] The most wicked of the witches.
[3] The unguents.
[4] I. e., within the city.

to the aid of such a one, the curse of God will light upon his house, and he will be touched by it in his goods, and in his body, and afterwards also in his soul. Fye! answer me: doth it indeed seem to you that one who in her day in such a fashion as that hath killed twenty or thirty little children, hath done so well that when at length they are accused before the Rulers you should go thither to their aid and should beg mercy for them? If it had befallen thee that she had killed one of thy little children, how then would the matter seem to thee? From thine own feelings take thought for another. Think of another and greater fact: dost thou not reflect that such enchanters, every time that they have worked any charms or spells whatsoever, by so doing have denied God? How great a sin doth this seem to thee, to deny God, eh?

The city of Siena has as ornament the most beautiful women, and those most bedecked and beautified of any place in the world.

5. — O men, may God bless you, and to you women, and to all of you together, I speak, and now stretch open your ears and your eyes, — I mean the eyes of the intellect, and the ears of the body. Hearken, remember well what I say, old and young, men and women, my brothers and sisters. Have you not heard that Siena has never been immersed in so great luxury and in so great vice, and in so great riches, with so much adornment of dress as she is to-day? Such an exterior doth show that thy life is carnal. I wish to point out to you that this city is adorned by the most beautiful women and the most bedecked and beautified of any place that I know. I know of men who so deck and array their wives, and of women who so array their daughters, that they have not in their houses as much as they have spent in dress. And ofttimes this doth derive from evil customs. Such a one will bring home his newly married wife, and if she can not go forth to him decked in trailing garments, with silver, with precious stones, with acorns, with silken garlands, with pearls, and with fifty other gewgaws, all full of vanity, there will never be peace between them, unless she hath all these things. And do you not perceive that you are laying waste both one house and the other? One because of the great dowry, and the other because of these vanities? The coffers are full, and no use is made of all this, except for evil; for you might live in

riches if you were wise. Seest thou not that the garments thou causest to be made are worth almost naught in comparison of what they have cost thee? And what dost thou then with all this? After thou hast brought home thy wife, who hath come into thy house with those garments, when that she hath arrayed herself in them twice or thrice, then she doth put them away in a chest, and there they lie useless, and naught is done with them, unless it be perchance for her daughters; and often meanwhile she will have need of somewhat else, for the want of which she will often suffer. Such as these we should treat with greater severity than one who doth introduce a harmful fashion into a city. Who is the occasion thereof we should fix in the ground head down. [1] Do you not consider how great a sin it is to introduce a harmful fashion? And once being known, what should be done to those who follow it? Some tailor perchance hath been the cause of a very grave sin, and of very grievous injury to a city because of the harmful fashion that he doth bring in there; and we should punish him as an example to all, so that this might be remembered forever. This may always be seen, that a woman as soon as she hath perceived a new fashion, because she is empty-headed she doth straightway betake herself to the tailor and saith to him: I wish such and such a style, — and she doth carry her garment thither. If it can not be made over anew, then doth she cut it again, and doth alter it according to the new fashion, and in a moment she will have made it worth less by a third. Would you see how great harm you do to yourselves? Tell me, of how great a loss may this be the cause to one who hath a single garment? It may be the cause of so much; and to her who hath two, and doth alter these as well according to the fashion, of twice as much; and who hath ten, — draw thou thy conclusion therefrom; and if perchance there may be a person who at one time shall have seven or eight garments altered according to the new fashion, straightway these will be worth less by forty or fifty florins. Seest thou not who hath been the occasion of this? I say that we should

[1] This was the method of punishing traitors and assassins.

fix them in the ground. But, have done! do you never take thought for anything whatsoever? Wouldst thou that I should point out to thee somewhat even worse than this? Perchance there may be a woman who will not have such garments as it will be possible to alter according to the new fashion, and she will wish to make new ones, and perchance she will not be able; and in order to make her garments in this manner, she will herself fall into fifty wicked evils, and cause her husband as well so to do.

In Siena there is need of the medicine of Friar Cudgel.

6. — Ah, woe is me! I am ever weighing these matters for the sake of your living in the right way; and I am ever measuring that which you do, and I see so many sins. I see so many excesses; I come upon so much that is dissolute in you. And I have spoken so much in regard of this, and also I know full well that others as well have spoken thereof. Even Christ, Christ himself, I say, and all the saints have not been able to make you amend yourselves! Alluring words have not availed, nor prayers, nor have supplications availed so that you have ever wished to betake yourselves to the right way of life. But believe me, believe me, in the end you will find that I tell you what is true; that there will come hither among you one who will force you to change your ways; for Friar Club or Friar Cudgel will have greater force than had Christ or the Saints, or any preacher. Lay it up in your minds, and remember, Friar Cudgel will compel you to do that which Friar Bernardine hath never been able to enforce. Knowest thou what medicine is suited to him who is full of humours? For his cure flushing is needful, and injections, or medicine which shall expel his choler. Knowest thou what medicine thou hast need of, Siena? Thou hast need of the rod. A few such beatings will serve to make thee straighten thyself. I know not whether I am beside myself! O women, am I out of my head? Think you that I am mad? Know you what I think of you? I think you are all mad. You do not yet know yourselves, I say to you. Women, your tabards will bring you to amend yourselves; for the time will come, and it is near at hand, when you will be found to have so rich a supply in your houses that you yourselves will grieve that you do possess so many goods,

since before your eyes they will be taken from you, and you will look on and will not be able to help yourselves; you will be despoiled, and the goods will vanish away. Believe me, believe me, the judgment of God is at hand! It is needful that you be purged in your repletion, either by physic, or by boils, or by ulcers; some outlet you must have. And therefore see to it I pray, that you gather together possessions in plenty, for the more you have the more you shall pay for. And this will be the first cause wherefore God will send his judgment upon you; because of pride, and the viciousness of your lives.

Of justice executed by King Lewis upon an evil doer on Good Friday.

7. — Woe is me, fellow citizens! Oppose yourselves never to the right course of justice, in as much as you hold dear your own greatness: cast her not out among the dead, for I know well whereof I speak, *et cetera*. Hearken, I would tell you of something which perchance to you may seem a great matter. I have heard that King Lewis was indeed a man of God, and that he was very wise; there were certain men who wished to ask a boon of him, they wished to ask him to set free a man who was in prison, and they determined to go and to ask this of him on Good Friday, and they did so. When they were come to him, that one among them who had been chosen to speak, said: Your Sacred Majesty, we ask of you a boon for the love of our Lord, who on the same day that this is, willed to die for the salvation of mankind, and to loose it from that bond by which it is bound full fast in the hands of its enemy. And there they made to him a long and pleasing discourse. In sum, when they had come to an end, they said: Deliver to us such a one, whom you have in prison. He answered and said: You are welcome: I will not reply to you as yet, because I would see how this matter should stand. And he had his breviary brought to him, and opened it where it fell by chance, and commenced to read: *Beatus vir qui custodit iudicium, et facit iustitiam in omni tempore* Blessed is he who keepeth judgment, and doth justice at all times. And when he had seen this verse, straightway he ordered that he of whom they spake should be led forth from prison, and that justice should be executed on him; and as he ordered, so was it done, at once, on Good Fri-

day. O-o-o! O-o-o! [1] On Good Friday this was well done! I say to thee that it is well at all times to uphold and to execute justice. And I say that he employed both justice and mercy in executing it upon that day, for he had regard only to that which was right.

See that thou consent not ever to favour usury.

8. — And moreover I wish to add this for thee: I say this not out of hate, nor out of ill will towards anyone whatsoever, and I say it not to anyone by name; I tell you of the matter only as it stands. If you have participated in this so that through you or by your aid a Jew doth practice usury here in Siena, he who hath assented thereto by means of his vote [2] hath incurred major excommunication. Hast thou understood me? Yes! Now I would have thee know what will come of suffering a Jew to remain in your city. Two disasters will come of it: first, it is the ruin of your city, and second, there is the excommunication of the Pope, and with this upon thee thou canst not be saved. First: why is it the ruin of thy city? I ask thee before all else, dost thou believe in the law of God? Yes. Next I say to thee, that if thou dost depart from this faith thou art a heretic. God hath commanded that thou shalt not practise usury. Oh! why hath he forbidden it? Because he hath seen that it is well not to lend at usury. Seest thou not that he hath given many negative commandments, among which thou seest this one: *Non furaberis* Thou shalt not steal? Lending at usury, what thinkest thou that this is? It is theft, and worse besides. If he had not given this commandment perchance I should have spoken otherwise of lending than I now speak. Saith one man: O when I come to die I will leave it to be given to the poor, or to give damsels in marriage, or to build churches or hospitals, or for other pious works to the glory of God! And I say to thee instead that in as much as thou dost consent to usury, straightway hast thou done contrary to

[1] Thus he imitates the horrified exclamation of those who are shocked by this fact.

[2] Jews might not come to Siena to practise usury there without the consent and approval of the Council of the Republic. The Saint here alludes to some recent decision in regard to this. In Siena in the Common Council a law was passed by white ballots and defeated by black ones; this is still the custom.

the commandment of God. God hath forbidden this, and therefore I say to thee that in no manner whatsoever mayest thou practise usury, and that thou must not help him who doth so, lest he may ever lend money through thy counsel, or aid, or words, or deeds. If thou shouldst say: Ay, but there must be someone who can come to the aid of the poor; [1] there is no other way than this one, — Knowest thou that which thou dost if thou sayest: there is no other way? Thou dost oppose the Lord God, who hath ordained everything in the world for the help of man, to whom he hath commanded that thou shalt not lend. And thou sayest: I can not do otherwise. This is as if thou saidst: God hath commanded unto me that which I am not able to do. Alas! do not so, do not lend, and consent not that any one should lend. Suffer not thyself to be blinded by the words of any one. If it were said to thee: Ay, but this is for the good of the poor; it is helpful to many who are in need, and who would starve if there were not someone who might lend them money; — do it not, I say; give not thy consent thereto with thy vote, if ever thou dost find thyself called upon for it. O whether thou art one of the Rulers, or if in any way whatsoever this matter doth depend from thee, see that thou dost never give thy consent nor lend thy aid that anyone should practise usury. *Quia non sunt facienda mala, ut inde veniant alia bona* Consent never that evil should be done in order that good may come of it. Knowest thou why? Because sin is always forbidden to thee. And therefore consent not ever that usury be practised, whether by Jew or Christian; and if thou hast consented thereto, thou art in the clutches of the devil. And further I would add for thee a codicil, O thou who didst cast thy vote in favour of lending, — if money hath been lent because of that vote, thou art bound to make restitution, and perchance this thou hast never known. *Qui occasionem damni dat, damnum dedisse videtur* Whoever is the occasion of wrong to anyone, or the cause that wrong hath been done to him, must make restitution to him who hath suffered the injury, and who doth suffer it. And

[1] I. e., by lending them money.

therefore thou seest that they go both to the home of the devil, — he who doth lend, and he who is the occasion thereof. And the money that they gain thereby? It cometh to ruin through the judgment of God. O usurer, thou who hast lent and robbed for so long a time and hast drained the blood of the poor, how great evil hast thou done and how grievous a sin against the commandment of God! Dost thou not perceive that thou art thrust deep down and sunken in the pains of hell? Thou sayest perchance: I will confess it. Alack, poor wretch, for all that thou goest to the confessor, to thy fine friar who may absolve thee, be assured that if he shall absolve thee, thou wilt go there nevertheless, in company with him! O confessors, how many of you are there who have been deceived by numbers of those who have promised to make restitution, and then mock God and the saints? Absolve them no more. If ever they return to you again, be wise. See to it at least that your soul be not lost together with theirs. If thou dost confess them, and they say to thee: I will restore the money, and I will amend in the future, — be sure first that thou seest they wish to do it in fact and deed, and then absolve them. And to you who have been the cause that such a sin hath been committed, see that you amend, that you too may be absolved as well. On the other hand, do you not consider that this doth mean the destruction of your city and of your commune? Do you not perceive how much money doth fall into their [1] hands? Love the common weal, and do not act contrary to the will of God. And therefore I say to thee: Do not lend; and to him who doth lend and to thee, O confessor, I say: Do not absolve them, if they forsake not their sin and make not satisfaction for it so far as they are able.

Have mercy upon the poor prisoners.

9. — You have here in prison three who go barefoot, and with no benefits of God or of this world. At one time a chaplain was there, who confessed them, and gave them communion, and used to say Mass for them, and comforted them in their tribulations. Now they lack every benefit and privilege: they receive no alms, they have no help, they

[1] Of the Jews.

have no instruction in the matter of right living, they know no comfort of any kind; in truth they have been so abandoned that they even have no bread to eat, and nowhere to sleep. Worst of all, I hear that even water has been cut off from them, which they may not have at will. But you have performed a noble work, since you have given it to the prostitutes. [1] O but consider the condition of your city! Woe is me, do you never reflect that they [2] can do naught whatsoever to help themselves! If they need bread, it must be brought to them, so with wine, so with water, with fire — everything must be brought in to them from without. And therefore, O women, I recommend them to you that you have some mercy upon them, — that you may send them bedsteads and mattresses, so that when they shall have been tortured they may have some little place in which at least they may lie down to rest. [3] Likewise I pray that you send them some bits of cloth, a few pairs of drawers, some shirts, for I know that you are well provided with these; you have a great store of them in your houses, of which you make no use whatsoever, and meanwhile they are in very great need of them. Moreover I hear that certain of them are there for a trifling cause: I would recommend these to your mercy. This is one of the seven works of mercy; therefore have mercy and take pity upon them. Sometimes then send them a little dish you have cooked for them, to one a little wine, to another one thing and to another somewhat else. Be not cruel in regard of them for if they have done any wrong, they are suffering

[1] It must be understood that the government had denied the prisoners the privilege of being supplied with water by means of conduits from the public fountains, — a privilege granted, it seems, to the neighbouring houses of prostitutes. These conduits, called *bottini* in Siena, constitute a marvellous piece of work, begun in the thirteenth century, and brought to its completion in the middle of the fifteenth. By means of such conduits, which collect the rain-water, the public fountains are supplied, besides the wells of many private houses.

[2] The prisoners.

[3] A heart-rending allusion to the sufferings from torture. As is generally known the State at this time did not provide for the support of the prisoners, but instead they themselves must provide their own food if they were able; otherwise they were dependent upon the alms given out of charity by the chance passer-by, or even upon contributions made by those who had brought about their condemnation. Hence their sufferings were so great as to arouse compassion in the hearts of all who were humane and merciful.

the penalty of it and are punished full well by being imprisoned as they are; and we are bound to have compassion for them and mercy. And because that we all have need of the mercy of God, let us be merciful. If you have pity on them, you will send them some bit of cloth, some clothes to cover them; you must remember that they are there only because of their poverty. [1] Let them awaken mercy and compassion in you.

[1] I. e., those imprisoned for debt.

XXVII. *How everything that doth belong to this world is vanity.*

1. — O thou who dost pursue after vanities, thou dost follow a wrong road; thou dost commence to enter thereon through vanities, and these commence at thy head, and continue down to thy feet: thou art full of vanity, head, back, and feet, everything about thee is vanity. Where shall we commence to speak? Shall we commence at the head, or at the feet? Not at the head, since that would be somewhat wearisome. Hast thou never heard that the head of the cat is very difficult to skin? We will commence with bodily garments, which are signs of the most grievous vanity, and of mortal sin. Wouldst thou see how evil a thing is this? Listen then, and learn. I wish to point out to thee ten offences against God, all occasioned by dress. Take them by five and five. Take the first.

Every part of men and women is filled with vanity, — the middle, the feet, and the head, that is to say, the whole body.

2. — The first is vanity; and it is vanity when thou dost wear that which is not suited to thee. The merchant doth wear a tabard, that is an offence against God. If there were a soldier here, and a manly one, he would strip it off from thee, because it is suited to him, not to thee. As we should behave towards one who should don the habit of Saint Francis, — we should strip it off from him, — so would the friars of Saint Dominic do in regard of one who should don their habit, and in like manner would the friars of Saint Augustine do. And in this manner, say I, should every Order do. O merchant, wouldst thou seem to be a merchant? Wear thou a dress of such a kind as is suited to thee. Thou mayest perchance wish to wear the tabard in order to appear that which in truth thou art, for thou art a naughty pilferer; and therefore thou goest garbed

If anyone should strip the garment off from a man to whom it is not suited, this would be well done.

like a soldier. I tell thee that dress is not suited to thee, but to a soldier, yes; and if thou dost wear it, thou dost appear to be a pilferer and a robber here at home. Thou wearest lappets and flaps, eh! O fathers, O mothers, O tailors, I know not what manner of conscience is yours, that you should waste cloth as you do. With truth may it be said: *Qualis pater, talis filius.* I have even seen one garment with sixteen yards of cloth cut up in lappets. The time will come when you must arrive at the mouth of the mill. Tush! I give no thought to such trifles as this.[1] But using so much cloth, dost thou not reflect how great a sin thou committest? Knowest thou what I would say to thee? Thou dost commence already to squander thy possessions. By what means are shops known, eh? By their signs. So are the contents of bales known, by the signs marked upon the outside of them. That which thou dost squander, to be sure, will never be taken from thee; but go, and make thy confession, — and thou, O friar, go, lay thy hand upon his head, and so make an end of it for him. How is a woman known to be good? By her bearing. So is the shop of that merchant of wool known by its sign. So do we know the shop of each merchant by its sign. And how are friars known? Forsooth by outward signs. How dost thou know the monk, whether he is black, or grey, or white?[2] By their sign. The outside doth show that which there is within. By the exterior may the interior be known. To this same purpose: I would say, that the woman who doth wear meretricious garments, I know not how she may be within, but from the outside I seem to detect evil signs. To me it seemeth that thou art a_____, I will not say it, but thou dost understand me well. How hast thou the hardihood to wear them, thou little fool? Hast thou no self-respect? But O thou, Mother or Father, how cometh it that thou dost permit her or make her to wear them? Knowest thou not that this is not the dress of women, but of harlots? I would say to thee, O maiden, or woman, who dost wear such garments, that thou dost appear to be a harlot: I say

[1] He represents the Sienese as saying this in reply to his warning.
[2] I. e., to which order he belongs.

not that thou art a harlot, but I say that such thou dost seem to be in thy dishonest bearing. O young men, when thou seest such as these, point the finger at them as if they were harlots, since that they wish to appear such; for that name will fit them right well, and with reason. Thou goest about it thyself seeking to be called less than good. Fye! tell me. Are you not Christians? Oh! if you are Christians, why do you not follow Christian teaching? Perchance you wish to seem, but not to be. Fye! pay heed to good example and follow it, and wear your garments in all honesty, and permit not either in act or in deed that of you may be said aught else than all that is good.

The garment that one doth wear, and laughter that showeth all the teeth, determine that which a man is.

3. — O fine young man! I wish to commence with you for a little. When thou goest abroad with thy hose drawn tight, and with a band encircling thy thigh, thy leg adorned with stripes which are broken here and there in such a manner as to entice, and thy parti-coloured stocking woven in varied designs, and thy doublet reaching only to thy middle; in very truth by such bearing thou dost show thyself to be that which thou art! In this guise when thou returnest home thou dost draw off thy tabard, among sisters, and sisters-in-law, and kinswomen, whereby there is brought before them everything shameful and ribald, and from this ofttimes worse doth result. Hast thou never considered how the tabard is made? It is made like the housing of a horse, with lappets at the side and around the bottom so that thou wearest thy garments in the fashion of a beast; this doth mean that thou art a beast to all outward seeming; seeing thee dressed like a beast, it may be concluded that within thou must be like to a beast also. Moreover, thy cap, wearing it so, sticking up high in air, like the point of a sack, — oh, how pleased thou art with thyself! O fine young man, thou who takest thought for naught, know this; it is not pleasing to God that thou shouldst wear thy hose as thou dost wear it, in broken stripes, or sprinkled with designs in colour, like a green sauce, and with thy doublet so short, *et cetera*. And in like manner the tabard, with so many lappets and cut in so many patterns, which show that thy heart is divided by many affections. The cap high up in air, like a sack carried

aloft, what else doth this signify than pride? Likewise thou, O woman, who dost wear so full a garment and ample that many a time it maketh thee to sweat, with sleeves which trail on the ground, and thy thin little arms stick out of them; — and tabards as well, all cut in patterns, and daubed and streaked with many colours. Such things as these all proclaim sinful vanities, and thou thyself proclaimest that thou hast but little good sense, as thou goest about grinning and showing thy teeth.

The second sign of sin is called variety.

4. — The second sign of sin is called variety. Knowest thou what is meant by variety? It consists in those garments in checks, all embroidered and flowered and with stripes of different colours: thou dost understand me well; and such things as these dost thou wear with only too great willingness. And knowest thou what this doth show in thee? It showeth that thy mind is variable and irresolute, as is thy body. Wouldst thou be assured that I speak the truth? Why dost thou wear them? Dost thou wear them to give pleasure to thyself? No, in faith. Well then, thou dost wear them in order to give pleasure to others. Dost thou perceive that thou art the occasion of most grievous sin, and that thou dost burden thy soul with a very great responsibility? Hearken, hast thou never heard of a crow, who once dressed herself in the feathers of every kind of bird? Oh, she was so beautiful! She was all made of changeable colours. Knowest thou what came of it? All the other birds ranged themselves about her, and each one took its own feather, and so was she left, plucked of all her plumage. To the same purpose, O woman, thou who dost wear so many things that are not thine own, if the wool that thou hast upon thy back should return to the sheep, and if the silk should return to the worms that made it, and if the hair that thou wearest should return to those to whom it once belonged, who are dead, and the horse-hair that thou dost use should return to the horses; if, in short, everything that thou hast taken from others for thy adornment, should return thither whence it came, — oh! thou wouldst be left plucked of thy plumage, thou wouldst not then have so many parti-coloured garments and so many

gewgaws as now thou hast, and thou wouldst not commit so many sins as thou dost now commit.

The third sign of sin is called regard for appearance.

5. — The third sign of sin is regard for appearance. This sin is generally to be perceived, because there is no one who does not seek to have the most costly clothes that may be had. Oh! there is to be found many a one who will bring a dowry of but twenty-five lire to her husband, but yet will demand a rich garland. Oh, how blameworthy is this! Lately in a certain house I estimated that three gowns which the mistress had hanging at the window, were of greater value than all the other things together which were in the house. Doth this seem to thee praiseworthy, eh? There is no woman of ever so little importance who does not demand scarlet cloth and violet, and a rich garland. Note this now, you will find that the peasants too will demand scarlet cloth. This hath been told to me. Woman! again I admonish thee, wear thou silk no more, — yet have I heard that now the men wear it! Woe is me! You take not thought for many things as you should. What think you the devil is now about? He hath struck your fine garments a sorry blow. Wouldst thou be assured of this? Of your garments, O women, I have heard that when you can no longer wear them [1] the men have them altered for themselves, and to fit these to their backs they waste and throw away much cloth and silk. Alack! Woe is me! Measure yourselves, measure yourselves but a little, consider whether this fashion of dress doth befit thee.

The fourth sign of sin which displeaseth God is called costliness in dress.

6. — The fourth sign of sin which displeaseth God, is called costliness, on the part of those who demand costly garments of gauze or silken stuffs. Knowest thou what I say to thee above all? I say that he who doth array himself in that which doth not belong to him, doth commit a mortal sin; I say that the rich man should dress himself in more distinguished fashion than the craftsman, and this is becoming; but dress not thyself with so great distinction that thou dost go beyond bounds. What need hast thou of so many silken garments, Siena, of so many embroidered ones, eh? Wouldst thou see how thou must do to save thyself if thou

[1] I. e., because they are out of fashion.

dost wear them? Hearken to Jerome, who saith thereof: *Nemo pretiosis vestibus induitur, nisi ad inanem gloriam* No one doth deck himself in costly garments except out of vainglory. Vainglory is a mortal sin: verily, for thou seest that thou art always in mortal sin while thou dost wear these garments. Wouldst thou be assured of the truth of this? When thou dost put on such garments as these, dost thou put them on in order that thou mayest be admired in thine own house, or by those outside? I believe not that thou dost put on these garments for those of thine own household: — nay, when thou returnest there, thou dost even get thyself out of them. Is it not as I say?

The fifth sin and sign of the displeasure of God is injustice.

7. — The fifth sin and sign of the displeasure of God is injustice; and here we will pause a little, for if thou wilt look well into this sin, thou wilt see that of ten which thou dost commit, nine are comprised in this one. Thou wilt give thy daughter to a man as his wife; and neither he who taketh her in marriage, nor her father, nor her mother, doth consider whence come her possessions; whereas if they were wise, they would have considered it their duty to think of this before all else: whence come these possessions, whence come these garments, of what is her dowry made up? For many times, and most times, it is made up of robbery, of usury, and of the sweat of the brow of peasants, and of the blood of widows, and of the marrow of wards and orphans. Who would take one of those petticoats and squeeze it and wring it, would see issue therefrom the blood of human beings. Woe is me! Do you never think how great cruelty is this, that thou shouldst dress thyself in garments that this man hath gained for thee, who perisheth with cold? And thou sayest: my father stands well and is rich; he hath given me a very great dowry. And doth it not seem clear to thee that he stands well? Yea, with his head down! [1] If the husband of a woman of this kind were to do that which he should do, things would go far better than they go now. Thou hast it that Christ was dressed in a purple garment, so that he should be held in derision, for they wished to mock

[1] See footnote, p. 169.

him; and yet it was suited to him, since that such a garment is the most precious one that can be found in this life; so that he deserved it well, since that there was never a creature more precious than Christ. And therefore, by the example of Christ, O woman, this morning learn this. Every time that thou dost wear violet, which hath in it the colour of vermilion, if thou dost wear it when it hath been ill-gained, thou dost wear it in mockery of Christ. And you have five of them, now take the other five. [1]

The first of the other five signs of sin is called superfluity.

8. — The first of the other five is called superfluity: whereas you must reflect that when God gave the garment of skin to Adam, he gave it to him out of decency, and to protect him from the heat and the cold, so that it might be fitted to his needs, and in this all the holy Doctors agree; and he had one only and no more. O thou who hast so many of them, and keepest them in a chest, see to it, forsooth, that they be not moth-eaten; see to it that thou dost put them out in the morning sun to air, and shake them well, and look to them often. And now weary thyself in such work as much as thou wilt, yet shalt thou not be able to hinder but that moths shall consume them, since that the garment which is not worn, is always spoiled; and that which is spoiled is a loss. Go, then, and give an account of this in the other life. And because of this said Saint James in the fifth chapter of his Canonical Epistle: *Vestimenta tua a tineis comesta sunt* Your garments are moth-eaten; and if they are not consumed by material moths, yet they will be consumed by spiritual ones. Knowest thou what are spiritual moths? They are cursed avarice. Tell me, whence cometh it, that thou dost weary thyself with so much work all the year for these, [2] and dost never wear them? Thou dost weary thyself all the year, shaking them and hanging them up on poles; and a poor woman standeth yonder and doth freeze with cold, because that she hath not even so much clothing as she hath need of. What thinkest thou that her shivering doth cry out to God in respect of thee? O if thou shouldst hear

[1] Of the ten offences against God. See Paragraph 1.

[2] I. e., these garments which are laid away.

it, thou wouldst hear the cry: Revenge! revenge! So in like manner if thou shouldst hear the cry of thy coffer, which doth cry out to God: *Miseremini mei, miseremini mei!* So likewise do thy poles cry out, when they are heavily laden, so that they break down under the weight. In like manner doth thy coffer cry out, when thou dost cram them into it. And thou lookest on at the poor man who doth perish with cold, and thou takest no heed thereof. Thou dost not hear any sound of cries, forsooth. Knowest thou why? Because thou sufferest not from the cold; thou dost fill thy belly with good food, thou dost drink thy fill, and thou hast many garments upon thy back, and ofttimes dost thou sit by a fire. Thou takest thought for naught else: with a full belly thou art comforted in thy soul. And how many shirts, O women, have you sent down here to those unfortunate prisoners, eh? [1] But I hold you excused for a certain reason. I hear forsooth that about two shirts, and two pairs of drawers, and one pair of old stockings with holes in them, have been sent. But believe what I say, in the end you will die in the midst of your goods, and the devil will carry you away. Do you know wherefore I say that I hold you excused for a certain reason? Oh, I will tell you this.

Of the ass of the three boroughs.

9. — Have you never heard the story of the ass of the three boroughs? It befell in Lombardy. On a road there is a little hut a mile perhaps from a mill. These three boroughs agreed to keep an ass in this hut, which should do the work of carrying the grain of these three boroughs to the mill. It happened that a man of one of the three boroughs went for this ass, and having brought the ass to the village, and having put a good load of corn on its back he leads it to the mill; and while the corn is being ground, he unties the ass and lets it graze: and you know that in the pasture-land about a mill there groweth but little grass, so often do people come thither. When the corn was ground, he taketh the meal, and putteth the load upon the ass, and leadeth it home with this load; and when it was unloaded, he leadeth the ass back to the place where

[1] See p. 175. Sermon XXVI., Par. 9.

it doth belong, in the hut, without giving it aught to eat, saying within himself: the man who used it yesterday must have fed it well, so that it can not be in great need of food: and so he left it. It befalleth that on the next morning following, another man of another borough came for this ass, and he too wished to put a load of corn upon it. And when he had brought it home, he put upon it a load of corn even heavier than the first one, and without giving it aught to eat, he led it to the mill; and when the corn was ground and the meal carried home, he led the ass back to the hut, without giving it aught, thinking that he who had used it on the day before must have fed it well; and so he left it, without doing aught for it. And then: I have somewhat else to do at present. And here are two days in which the ass hath eaten naught. The third day cometh another to the hut for the ass, and bringeth it home with him, and putteth upon it a heavier load than it hath ever carried, thinking within himself: Oh, this ass belongeth to the commune, it must be strong! and so he leadeth the ass to the mill with his load. It cometh about that likewise it is given to eat naught, neither by him any more than by the others. At length, when the corn is ground, he putteth the load back upon the ass and setteth out, driving it before him. The ass however was weak by this time, and did not travel very quickly. Marry! the fellow commenceth to use his stick, and layeth it on to the ass and belaboureth it with many beatings, and the ass finally with a great effort carried the load to his house. When then he was leading back the ass to the hut, it could scarce move on the way; and he beat it continually, saying: See what an ass the commune keeps for three boroughs; it is worth naught! He beat it so that he led it with difficulty to the hut; nor even there did he give it aught. Would you hear more? The end was, then, that the ass did not come out of it with a whole skin, but on the fourth day was dead. So in like manner do these women talk, who are deceived by avarice and by the idea of their own poverty. They say: these prisoners can not be in want, since people have faith in that which Friar Bernardine doth say, and he hath recommended them to our

mercy, and everyone hath faith in him; hence he must indeed have had much given to him. Alas, poor wretches! how you deceive yourselves, and are deceived by avarice. Each of you holdeth fast, and you have so many goods that you know not what to do with them. First, as to your saying that all have faith in me, I say to you, that my preaching doth accomplish naught. As to you, I say, that each one of you holdeth fast, and the poor unfortunates pine away and perish. Ah! look not at one another's hands.[1] For I heard that after that poor wretch who was hanged had been tortured, when he was brought back into prison, the only resting-place he had was the ground. For shame! Officials, look to this, for the love of God! I grant you that justice is a holy thing, but it must not however be exercised with cruelty. Woe is me! I see in you so great cruelty, that I fear lest the vengeance of God may overtake you because of it. You see in how great need are these poor unfortunates. On the other side you have so many goods that you know not what to do with them; and you would rather let them rot than give them to these poor needy ones. Alas! recognise the benefits that are yours and be moved to pity for these. See to it that some one doth come forward and put himself at the head, and here let The Shepherd[2] have care of the money. In like manner would I say to you, O women! see that in every contrada some woman shall come forward, and see to it that she is a good woman, and trustworthy, and that they[3] may be provided for in some way. Where charity and pity are lacking, Oh, this is an evil sign which I see in you! Home again![4]

The second sign and sin which displeaseth God is called the desire to attract notice.

10. — The second sign and sin which displeaseth God is called the desire to attract notice. The desire to attract notice is within the man or woman who to-day wears garments of ribbed cloth, of divers colours. What thinkest thou these garments of ribbed cloth proclaim, all gorgeous

[1] That is, do not each one regard what another gives.

[2] In St. Bernardine's time Francesco Marchi, called «The Shepherd», had charge of the alms contributed for the relief of prisoners.

[3] The prisoners.

[4] See footnote 2, p. 8.

and with stripes? They proclaim naught else than signs of division.[1] Seldom shalt thou see such signs as these that facts follow not upon them. If you did but know how great evil will result from these garments of yours, perchance you would destroy them. And therefore if any woman destroy naught, send me word thereof, for I will pray for her, that God may save her from the destruction which I see awaiting you. I shall wish to measure the garments of Friar Cudgel with mine own. Oh, saith she who taketh no account of this, he maketh us so fearful that if we should believe him, we should destroy all our possessions. Knowest thou what I would say to thee? Observe this that when there is a great mist, one who is upon a height and looketh down therefrom doth see everything, as if it were a sea.[2] To the same purpose: we who are apart from the world, when we look down into such matters as these, at once we perceive the dangers within them. Seest thou not that thou art immersed in this mist? Ere this have I been in a place where I saw like garments, and straightway I told the people there that if they did not see to it, Friar Cudgel would do so, and although they did not believe me, it happened as I told them. Ay me! You are clouded with mist, and you see naught! I see plainly and clearly the dangers that are to overwhelm you! I say that when a city doth put on such a garb, it may expect the judgment of God. O city garbed in a foreign dress, await, await the scourge of the angels of God! if the Scriptures lie not, thou canst not escape it.

The third sin is called fashion

11. — The third sin is called fashion. This is good for those to hear who form the councils, from whom this depends, and who might perchance find a remedy[3] ordering — and yet it would be in vain[4] — that only so much silver might be worn; that only so much cloth might be used in garments; and that such great sleeves might not be made with wings to them, which will make thee fly to hell.

The fourth is called enticement

12. — The fourth is called enticement, for when there

[1] I. e., of instability, irresolution.
[2] Everything is, as it were, spread out before him.
[3] By passing a sumptuary law.
[4] Because it would be too difficult to enforce the execution of the law.

cometh here a new manner of dress, as when there cometh a prostitute dressed after a French fashion, straightway will this be adopted. Is there here present any maiden of an age to marry, or married woman, who doth wear modern dress? No sooner do they see those garments than straightway they have their own ripped apart, to alter them according to the new fashion. Knowest thou what should be done? First the woman who doth so array herself should be burned, and then the mother who doth consent thereto, and afterwards the tailor who maketh them. [1] In very truth if I might prevail he should make no new fashions! for do you not perceive that this is the destruction of your city? I would add for you this as well: that he who doth make them, and she who doth wear them, and she who doth cause them to be worn, doth sin mortally each and every time; but far more the tailor, who doth bring in such a fashion: for with this sharpening of his wits he is the occasion of much evil: and this they do, forsooth, to gain thereby.

Damaging loss is the last.

13. — Damaging loss is the last. How many goods have you lying useless in your house, and how many are there of you who, for all that they have very many, buy yet more of them? Better far would it be for thee to spend that money in merchandise for thy shop than let it lie useless as thou dost. Tell me, moreover, thou hast pledges with the Jew, which cost so much monthly, — oh, how much couldst thou lessen the cost of these if thou didst but know how to keep thyself within bounds! Thou hast pledges with the Jew, and thou wilt keep thy chests full of garments, of which thou dost make no use, and continually doth usury gnaw thy bones. When I regard thy children, forsooth, how much gold, how much silver, how many pearls, how many embroidered garments thou dost make them to wear! All these things do you keep lying there, and you might fill your shops and your warehouses with merchandise, and do good to the city and to yourselves as well.

Wish not to have a head like a cat's.

14. — And here hast thou seen ten kinds of sin and

[1] I. e., the garments in the new fashion.

occasions of loss and damage to your city because of your decking your bodies overmuch. And I would have this suffice for your bodies. Let us speak now of the head. Wish not to have a head like a cat's, which is difficult to skin. Because that the head of a cat is so difficult to skin, therefore I use this similitude for thee. The woman who hath made this a habit to carry inside her head or upon her head, many vanities, [1] and all sinful, because of this evil custom of hers, it will prove more difficult for her to rid herself of them there than from any other part of her body. And in like manner do I say to thee also, O thou man! away with so much silly foolery on your caps and with over many pleats and puffs, which doth signify in very truth that thou hast embellished them with but too much of the goods of others. And in faith I know not that since I came here anyone hath made restitution of any money whatsoever of that which you have gained by dishonest means. Let us speak a little of you, women, for this doth belong to the subject. First, above all I admonish you that you follow the path of decency, and that you proceed in such a way that you may not be displeasing to God nor to your husbands. You do not perceive that you are ruining yourselves and that you are making yourselves hateful to the men. The mouth of one of you doth stink from her besmearing it with scents; one doth bleach her hair; one doth daub herself with one thing, and one with another. How many there are who have destroyed their teeth by polishing them overmuch! Knowest thou what I would say to thee? Remember that this is the work of the devil in order that he may break thy neck and his, and have the soul of both one and the other of you. Be not amazed if thy husband can not endure to see thee; thine is the fault. Tush! I say not that thou shouldst not be neat and dainty, — on the contrary I approve this in thee; but be decent and clean in order that you may be pleasing to them [2]. Do not laugh, for you have yet to weep. I seem to see so many ornaments upon your heads, that it doth seem to me

[1] Vanities is here used also with the meaning foolish ornaments.
[2] I. e., to your husbands.

indeed a horrible sight; one hath a head-dress in the manner of battlements, one like a citadel, one like towers projecting out as doth this tower [1]. I see battlements upon which are raised aloft the standards of the devil; and some have crossbows so as to strike others and in like manner to be struck; and here there is battle unceasingly, as if it were one of your countries which was being fought with. What should you think if any other standard than your own were raised above the walls of your countries, and your own were taken thence? I believe that first above all you would endeavour to discover who it had been, and then you would be as hostile to him as possible, and next you would do your utmost so that your standard might return up there. And this I say in regard of the vanities on the heads of the women.

The woman should look better and should be more neat and nice in her room with her husband than at the Duomo and in the Piazza there among all the people.

15. — Hast thou ever heard that the host doth sell two wines at the same time, and that one is better than the other? And the better he doth always give to such as come there often, or to such as are his friends; and the worse he gives to such as are simpletons. Precisely in this manner doth the vain woman. She selleth the better wine in the Piazza of the Duomo to those who stare at her, and the other she doth sell to her simpleton of a husband. When she goeth to church she goeth there all covered with ornaments, all trig and fine, wearing garlands of acorns, so that she doth seem to be my Lady Smiraldina, whereas she goeth about the home looking like to a drab. Verily you should have respect for yourselves, as well as for the many people who see you abroad, and you should look better and should be more neat and nice in your room with your husband, than at the Duomo and in the Piazza there among all the people. And ofttimes abroad thou [2] dost appear a lion, while at home thou art a tame, silly sheep. Hearken! Beware, lest thou be the occasion of bringing him into sin, and thyself as well, for that thou art not neat and nice as thou shouldst be with him. And on the other hand I admonish thee that if thou dost deck thy-

[1] The famous *Torre del Mangia* « Mangia Tower », of the *Palazzo Pubblico* of Siena.

[2] Here he addresses the husband.

self, thou shalt look to it that he doth not perceive in thee that which is far other than wholly good and modest: see that he doth never see in thee aught else than purity and decency; aye, in faith would I have you dainty and fine-drest, but all with discretion, and in the way of modesty. If thou seest that thy husband doth truly care for thee, and doth not regard the manner of thy dress, then thou mayest be more simple and at ease in the manner of thy dress; but if he careth not, thou wouldst do ill not to see to it that thou appear well dressed before him. This I say in respect of many women who at home are hideous, and as black as those bakeresses at the oven, who care not how they appear; this I do not approve.

There are some women who have more heads than the devil.

16. — Great wickedness and sin is it, believe me, to carry so great a load on your heads; for each one of you men and women has learned to carry a bale. Seest thou not the harm that thou dost, setting aside the sin? First thou dost injure thy head because of so great heat; within a little thy mouth will stink for thee, and thy breath; thou dost ruin thy teeth, and they will ache at the least touch of cold, I warn thee: *Per quae peccavit homo per ea torquetur* By what member thou sinnest in that thou shalt be tormented in the other world. [1] O woman, pay heed to my words! Thou hast made a God for thyself of thy head, and so dost thou likewise, O mother, of the head of thy daughter; thou hast no thought but of this, and ofttimes it is full of nits. Some women there are as well who have as many heads as the devil; every day they put on a new head. The devil hath seven, and there are women here who have even more. For in these last fifteen years I recall so many kinds of head-dress, so many fashions, that I stand agape. For in truth you have wandered farther astray than I could ever have believed possible. Away with them, in the name of God! for in thiswise you would enter the road to destruction. You perceive it not as we perceive it. I see a certain woman with a head like tripe, another with one like a pancake, and yet another with one like a trencher, or such like foolery, — one

[1] « That they might know that by what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented. » Wisdom XI. 17.

doth dress it up high aloft, another low down. Oh, so many fashions as these are indeed evil signs! Down with them, I say! Thus do I say to you, women, down with all these vanities! for if you could but see yourselves, you are like to little owls, and to long-eared owls, and to screech owls.

To wear a tail dragging on the ground is the act of a beast.

17. — Enough! I would have this suffice in regard of the head. Let us come now to the feet, — and this is the best of all: to the feet! O young man, I say not that thou shouldst ever measure the woman with a yard-stick [1] when that thou wouldst take her in marriage; but I would have you measure her to see whether she be good, and wise, and industrious, discreet, a good housewife, busied about things, etc. There are such as would have her a big beast, and thou art another, and between you then you will form many great beasts. Oh! I would tell you that of which perchance you have never thought. What may a pair of slippers be worth perchance? What are they worth? Perchance they may be worth a half a florin; those handsome painted ones may be worth perchance a florin, — those with the highest heels. Wouldst thou have me prove to thee that they cost thee more than six, and more than eighteen as well, and even more than sixty? Oh, how can this be? and are the florins perchance inside them? Not so fast! Wouldst thou have me prove it to thee? Now, follow this reasoning. How many gowns hath thy wife? She hath ten. One and another, how much do they cost perchance? They cost fifty florins each. Now, tell me this: how much cloth goeth into a gown when the slippers are a span in height, eh? Come now, tell me, have you never considered this? Thinkest thou that there goeth into it cloth to the value of fifty or sixty florins as I have told you? Dost thou wish to see it more clearly? The widest part of the gown is about the slippers, since that there where it is nearer to the ground the wider is the gown; a span of the gown about the feet doth contain more in its width than four times this in the upper part. And the cloth that goeth into the train, which I had passed over? Herein lieth thy likeness to a beast. And would God that I were lying in

[1] See p. 72, Sermon XIV, Par. 3.

my throat; whereas you will find instead that I do speak the truth, — that the trains which you wear are messengers of wars.[1] Hearken! I would show you the refinement of such women as wear these trains. First it is the act of a beast to wear a tail dragging behind, *quia factus est homo et mulier a Deo sine cauda* God made man and women without tails. The devil it is who hath made them with tails, — for to man he hath affixed the sword, and to woman hath he affixed the garments trailing behind; so that they can neither one nor the other be better likened to beasts than in this respect. O women, answer me: what doth the woman's train when she walketh abroad in summer? It maketh a great dust; and in the winter it doth befoul itself in the mud; and he who doth walk behind it in summer, doth breathe in the incense that it doth send up, and this is called incense to the devil. Now, let us consider that in winter your gown doth befoul itself in the mud about your feet, because it doth wallow in the mud like a pig, and then it causeth you to lose a whole day in cleaning it. And if the woman giveth it to be cleaned by the maid servant, how many curses doth she call down upon her, reviling her mistress, my Lady Sow!

[1] See Sermon XXV. Par. 2, p. 159.

XXVIII. *How business ought to be carried on.*

He who is a priest or a religious is not permitted to barter and traffic.

1. — First above all I say that a business doth become unlawful with relation to the person engaged therein. For example, understand me: it is not lawful for me who am a friar, to hang a man, since that doth not belong to my art; that art belongeth to secular men. And so, I say, it is not permitted to any friar or priest. And thus, I would say, that neither to friar nor to priest is it permitted to do that which belongeth to secular men to do. The priest and the friar should attend to the offices of the church and to the salvation of souls. Nor should you who are seculars give offices to religious; nor moreover should religious either accept them, or seek them, or exercise them. Nor should a religious entangle himself in secular business, no! Hearken now, answer me, fellow citizens: you are preparing your urns; are you placing friars in charge there?[1] If you are putting them there, put me there as well. You set yourselves to believe that your secular chamberlains of the Commune have stolen the money of the Commune, and for this reason perchance you would have them friars.[2] The

[1] I, e., in public offices.

[2] The office of *camarlengo*, chamberlain, of the Commune had been held from the earliest times by a religious, very often by a member of the Camaldolese Order. Saint Bernardine frankly opposed the introduction of religious into public business, and he so urged the institution of the lay treasurership, that in the beginning of January, 1428, that is, three months after these sermons were preached, a layman was elected Treasurer of the Commune. This important innovation shows how great regard his fellow-citizens had for Saint Bernardine's advice, even concerning the most delicate matters of government. In 1452 there was a return to the old system, but this lasted for only seven years, and from that time on the treasurer was always a layman. The Office of Treasurer of General Customs underwent the same change. When the Saint delivered these sermons the Treasurer of the Commune was a religious, Friar John of the order of the Servites.

friars perhaps wil not steal? Oh, it is an evil sign when because of this you demand friars! O what a blessing is this, that you do suspect one another? I have told you, and I say it to you because of the words of Paul: [1] entangle not religious with these businesses. Doth it not suffice that you go to the home of the devil out of your desire for these offices without that you should endeavour to drag us thither as well? They have no other words in their mouths than these: We trust them not.

The first thing to be done is this, that you must consider the person who doth carry on the business, whether he be secular or religious.

2. — I say to thee that this is an evil sign. You can not perform that which is acceptable to God, while you do so set yourselves against him, and against those who established the body of Church. Know you that which I would say to you, since you wish that they should hold office? See then that they wear secular dress, — that they wear caps tossed back, and that they have doublets which reach only to their middle! And thou mayest rest assured in regard of whoever doth bring it about or hath brought it about, that any religious should hold office, that I know certainly he hath committed a very grievous sin, — a mortal sin; since that he hath done that which was not permitted to him, nor is not, nor ever will be: and I say that whosoever was the occasion thereof, is bound to make restitution of all that money in respect of which the Commune hath suffered loss. Oh, a fine idea this, that they wished to place me in charge of the urns! [2] Oh, next I would be made keeper of the Castle of Montalcino! I am assured that this you wished to do out of good will, — but tell me, ought I not to know that this is not permitted to me? Fye! fye! Oh, I should have been a great simpleton, forsooth! Thou dost not cozen me, in faith, with so great ease. Oh! is it becoming that the executioner be paid by one who is at one and the same time priest and chamberlain of the Commune? Doth this belong to his office? Pray, will it be fitting then that

[1] II. Tim. II. 4 « No man being a soldier to God entangleth himself with secular businesses ».

[2] Although Saint Bernardine did not accept the office of captain of the urns here referred to, yet he had a great influence upon the manner of conducting the elections, as may be seen by the provisions made in regard to this on September 9 1427; these were made without doubt at the suggestion of the Saint, who was delivering these sermons in that very month.

he go afterwards to say Mass? But let us speak of this matter at length: What think you a religious doth when you have made him chamberlain? All the night doth he dream that he is counting money, and in his sleep he saith continually: four, six, eight, and he doth count without ceasing. In regard of myself I do believe that if I were in that office, I should steal more than the others steal. Have done! Manage your own businesses; give them not occasion of sin, but let them do what belongeth to them to do. Woe is me! for when I think of the sin that you are committing, both seculars and religious as well, I tremble with fear! You have made a fine friendship with the friars in faith, so that you would meddle in their businesses, and would have the friars entangle themselves in yours. Do not so, do not so. *Reddite quae sunt Caesaris Caesari, et quae sunt Dei Deo.* I say unto you that you should render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. Let them perform their offices, and you do yours. Do not confound the lance with the axe.[1] Do not thrust yourselves into their affairs, for I predict to you that if you do entangle yourselves in the business of one another, you will fall into mortal sin; and if you die in this sin, to the house of fire with you both! Hearken to a saying of Jerome, in the XXVIII. chapter: *Clericum negotiatorem et ignobilem inopem, gloriosum.* Where thou seest any of the clergy a tradesman, who doth entangle himself in many matters, now in this, now in that, and that from a poor man he doth come into any riches whatsoever, — believe me he is one to be handled with caution; and I say there is great danger in having to do with him. And therefore I say that the first thing to be done is this, that you must consider the person who doth carry on the business, whether he be secular or religious. This mist then is now cleared away.

The second point to be considered in regard of him who doth carry on business is out of what intention he doth carry it on.

3. The second point to be considered in regard of him who doth carry on business is, from what motive he doth carry it on. I told thee of it yesterday; to-day I will tell thee again. I say that if he doth this to provide for his

[1] I. e., the lance as the weapon carried by noble knights; the axe as the weapon of the executioner.

family, or in order to free himself from debt, or to marry his daughters, — then I say it is permitted to him. But what shall we say of him who hath no need thereof, who doth so spend himself, doth busy himself here, doth busy himself there, doth this, doth that, and doth never cease? Say I, that unless he doth this for the poor, he doth sin mortally, since that such hoarding as this is called the sin of avarice. See then whether I say not the truth to thee! If he hath not need, and doth hoard only for himself and for himself alone, what thinkest thou this is? Naught else than avarice. If he himself hath no need thereof, he ought to distribute it to the poor, or to hospitals, or in pious works. And if he doth use it otherwise, it is plain and clear to be seen that he doth gain and hoard out of avarice, and his people will have this, his kinsmen or his nephews, or his brothers, or cousins, or those who will never give further thought to him. Oh, it is an evil beast, avarice! Thou seest that with all this wearing himself by day and by night, yet never hath he satisfied any wish of his. And therefore is said in Ecclesiastes in the V. chapter: *Avarus non satiabitur pecunia.* [1] A covetous man shall not be satisfied with money; — the more he hath, the more he desireth. Shall we see whether I say the truth! Now put it to the proof, O miser! what dost thou wish? I wish ten thousand florins; had I but ten thousand florins I should feel that I was well off. Now then, here they are. Hast thou them? Yes. Next. What hast thou done with them? Oh, I have spent them! I want more. One of my partners hath repaid me one hundred florins which I lent him; I have spent it for cattle; I had need of fifty florins to set in order a house; I have need of yet more. Now then. How then. How much dost thou wish? I would have at the least, at the least, fifteen thousand. Seest thou that already his greed hath increased? Now then. Here, take them. What wilt thou do with them? Hast thou thought of this? Yes, there is by the side of my own house one that would suit me well indeed, and likewise this property doth stand between two that I own; if I might but have it, there would then be no one who could do any

[1] « Avarus non implebitur pecunia. » Ecclesiastes V. 9.

damage whatsoever to me; they[1] would all be side by side together. And straightway or in this, or in that, doth he spend it all, and even doth exert himself to procure yet more. I would have more money. O for what hast thou need of so much? Oh, if I had but a little more! I feel assured that I should not seek to add more to it. Once more, how much dost thou wish? I would have at the least, twenty-five thousand. O what wouldst thou do with so much? Oh, what would I do with it? There is a fortress in a certain place which would suit me exceeding well, and moreover I should like as well to own the property outside each of its gates. Mist is hateful to me. If there were mist at one gate, I should go to another, where there was no mist. He would have fine garments in new fashions: which is to say, in sum, that if he should have hundreds of thousands, he would not be content.

Of four other manners of sinning in selling of merchandise.

4. — Now let us look at four manners of sinning that do make the trade unlawful which some men practise. The first is the concealing of the truth; as for instance, he who doth possess a horse which hath a defect, and he wisheth to sell this; if he were to make known this defect, he could not sell it. I say that if he doth sell it, and doth not make known that defect, and if through that defect he should bring an harm to anyone, he who selleth it is held and bound to make restitution. The second is found in those who use diverse weights and measures, or scales, or balances. Hast thou never paid heed to him who doth sell by weight that he doth give a shove downwards with that which he putteth into the scale for thee? Each time is he bound to make restitution. The third occasion of sin is found in him who doth sell by measure; who will so stretch and pull the cloth that ofttimes he doth well nigh tear it asunder. Stretch with all thy force when thou hast it to sell! And likewise doth he who maketh the garment, — because in order to have it longer he doth stretch it so that he doth almost tear it, and sometimes it doth split down the middle, from head to foot. I say naught to thee of those who keep in a place which was damp that mer-

[1] I. e., my houses.

chandise ,which they sell by weight, so that it may weigh more !

Of a merchant who whereas he wished to cheat, was himself cheated.

5. — Hearken ! I wish to tell you of that which befell a merchant who was used to keep his merchandise in a place which was damp, so that it might weigh more. That time it went from bad to worse. One merchant went to buy saffron from another, and he who wished to buy having arrived at the shop of the one who had it to sell, he said: I wish as much saffron as I can find. Said he : I will give thee mine. And having showed it to him, at once he who was to buy it perceived that it was damp, and he said to the one who was selling it to him : See that it is sent to my house, and I will weigh it, and will give thee the money. The fellow sends it straightway, so that it may not dry, and then follows after the man who was carrying it, in order to weigh it. When they were arrived at the house of the other, said he who is to buy it : do me this favour; I can not wait now to weigh it, — seal it up, and leave it here for a time, and I will return. He doth so, and doth depart in God' s name in all peace. Marry ! When he is out of the house, at once the other hath the saffron taken up, and hath it put into an oven which was there near by, and when it is dry he hath it replaced there where the other had left it. Afterwards cometh the other merchant, and they weigh this saffron ; and he took his money and went about his own business. So it went from bad to worse. One made it damp so that its weight be greater than it was ; and the other put it into the oven, so that it might weigh less than it should, for perchance it dried more than it should have done. And in thiswise he who thought that he would cheat was himself cheated.

The third thing which doth make merchandise unlawful, is when a man doth sell something harmful.

6. — The third thing which doth make merchandise unlawful, is when a man doth sell something harmful ; and this may be understood in many ways. How great difference there is between one kind of merchandise and another, both in regard of worth and of harmfulness. O apothecary, who to rid thyself of thy goods doth many a time give something bad to him who doth pay for it, as if it were the finest in the world, in what doth thy sin consist ? First, it is a sin against good merchandise, and second against

just weight, and fair measure. Do not thou as many do, who follow a certain practice of theirs. The conditions of the body of each of us are not the same; this man is cold, this one warm; for one and the same medicine may do harm to one and good to another. Therefore trust never to thyself, but rely upon that which the physician saith to thee, who doth know from practice and from learning. See that it doth not happen to thee as once befell another apothecary. A man falling ill at once sent for the physician, and when he had seen the sick man, he said that he must needs take a certain medicine; he was told that he should order it. And having left the sick man, he went to the apothecary and said: take thy book, and write for such a one: Take half a dram of such a thing and two of such another, *etcetera;* and dissolve it in such and such water. And having prepared it in thiswise, see that it be given to this sick man. In the evening cometh the brother of the sick man to the apothecary for the medicine which the physician had ordered, and the apothecary giveth him a medicine which he had prepared after his own fashion, and not according to the directions of the physician. The other doth carry it home with him, and at night, when the hour was come for it, he giveth it to the sick man. And when it had been given to him in thiswise, it wrought with him so that he died from it. This man's brother goeth straightway to the physician, and told him what had befallen. The physician said that this could not have happened so, unless forsooth the apothecary had done as he himself wished, after his own fashion. Thereupon this man went to the apothecary with two witnesses, for the sake of caution. When the apothecary seeth him, at once he asked: How doth thy brother? Well, he replied. And how wrought the medicine with him? And he replied: Excellently well, I believe that by means of it he will be cured. When saith the apothecary: Great thanks then are due to me, for I compounded it of other things than the physician told me of. Then said he: We are witnesses to that which he hath said. And straightway he went to the Signoria, and related this matter, and how his brother had died. Finally the apothecary was taken into custody, and was condemned to death, and lost his life. And

this was because he was giving his wares without regard to measure, in order to rid himself of as much as possible; he was giving too full measure, and others paid the cost thereof. Do you understand me? Yes. Then beware of this. This man did not do as another did, who sold his comrade's wares at a cheap price in order to squander it, and to better the sale of his own.

Do not count money in too great haste so as to deceive the man or the woman who doth receive it.

7. — Another vice in regard of business lies in counting; it is that of the man who doth count so as to cheat; for with counting in so great haste he doth contrive to bewilder the man or the woman who doth receive the money, and this through his counting in haste: there, and there, and there, and there: one, two, three, five, seven, eight, ten, thirteen, fourteen, sixteen, nineteen, and twenty. And the poor little old woman, who hath not much wit, believeth that it is as thou sayest, and doth receive the money as thou givest it to her; and home she goeth, and doth begin to count it, coin by coin, and findeth herself cheated of three pence, and she returneth to him who gave her the money, and saith: Ay me! I went home with the money you gave me, and I have counted it again; I find that I lack three pence. Such men as this will reply: You will see that you have made a mistake in counting it. Saith she: no, you have given me too little, for the love of God, give it to me. Saith he: Oh! look whether you have not dropped it, hath not your purse perchance a hole in it? And so the poor creature hath the worst of it. Thinkest thou that this is pleasing to God? No, verily. Covet not thy neighbour's goods, this is one of the commandments; and the other saith: *Non furaberis* Thou shalt not steal. This is theft, that you take this from her, and she can help herself in nowise.

Thou shouldst never sell infected wares, since thereby thou dost endanger the life of him who doth eat thereof.

8. — Another manner of sin is murder; as for instance sometimes when a butcher will slaughter and sell at his counter, so much for a lira, meat that is infected. And many times they are themselves the cause of it [1]. In what condition think you, must an animal be which hath been inflated by a man who is himself infected with disease? He hath infected that animal, and there is the chance that it may kill

[1] I. e., of the infection.

whosoever doth eat of it. There are many who say that they inflate the animal in order that they may skin it more easily; but I say to thee that even if it be more difficult to skin, thou shouldst endure this labour, thou shouldst do that which doth belong to thy trade so far as it is possible. Moreover I would say in reply to those who tell me this: What is the reason wherefor at Rome they never inflate the meat? And yet there they slaughter them? [1] Cast it away, rather than sell such infected wares. Do not do as did a renegade Christian, one of those Christians « of the Cord » [2]. It is said that once he told the Sultan this, saying to him: I rid us of more Christians by killing them in a certain fashion than do all your followers with sword in hand. The fashion of it was as follows: that he used to go among the Christians, and sold meat and fish and other things which were tainted and infected, the which things were eaten by the Christians: and by this means, many of them died in a brief time.

Do not permit that the University shall ever depart from Siena, since therein men are fitted to make you known far and wide.

9. — From naught doth the Commune so profit as from the utility of the Guilds, and from merchandise which is bought and sold. Seldom are Guilds licensed which are harmful, — such as is one, that is, the snipping of cloth [3]; — snipping of cloth does naught for the common good. Moreover the Guild of poisons does naught for the common good. Whensoever a property doth sustain damage, or human beings, this can not be for the common good. Saith Scotus [4] in his Commentary on the 4 th. Book of Sentences, Dist. 15: that those things which a Commune can not dispense with are three: the Guild of Wool-weavers is one, the greatest utility doth result thereof to the common good. Likewise the Guild of Shoemaking. Such Guilds are maintained by merchants, who have wool and leather brought hither. Now in like manner as these two are necessary, so also is the University [5] necessary; it is but little appreciated

[1] Animals.

[2] That is, those Christians who lived in the Holy Land, and had been converted by Saint Thomas.

[3] See p. 178, Sermon XXVII. Par. 2.

[4] The 15 th. Distinction in the Commentary of Duns Scotus on Peter Lombard's « Books of Sentences ».

[5] The University of Siena, which still waits to have its history worthily written, dates its origin from the middle of the thirteenth century, In its wisdom, and out of its solicitude for learning, the Republic summoned thither distinguished men in

by those who have never studied aught. Never suffer it to depart from Siena, O Sienese, for you can not comprehend the profit and the honour which will accrue to you therefrom a short time from now. Consider Bologna [1], the fame thereof, and the utility and the honour. So will it befall you if you shall be able to maintain it, for therein are men fitted to bring you into renown everywhere. Since that you have the *Sapienza* here, extend its privilege to the merchants and throughout the Republic, because as I have told you, it is necessary and profitable to the common good, and is most pleasing to the Good Lord God. You may perceive even now that already there cometh forth from out of it a band of your citizens fitted for the doctor's degree. And as I say to the citizens, so do I say likewise to you who study: see to it that you become not such great simpletons. It [2] is a thing which is pleasing to God.

all ages, and upheld the reputation and dignity of the University, to which it added by procuring privileges from emperors for it and papal bulls. The greatest benefactor of the University among the popes was Gregory XIII; he assigned to it the patrimony of the Hospital of the *Misericordia* so as to promote the foundation of the famous *Casa di Sapienza*; here up to our own century there flocked many young men, Italians and foreigners, who applied themselves to the study of jurisprudence, medicine, and theology. The Sienese of to-day, faithful to these traditions, are devoted to their University, and they still maintain it, — even at a sacrifice — in dignity and prosperity.

[1] I. e., The University of Bologna.

[2] The University, or learning.

XXIX. *Of alms, and to whom alms should be given.*

To those who shall not have been merciful God will show a grim and wrathful visage, so that they will hide themselves in order not to meet him face to face.

1. — Ay me! while that we may exercise virtues, let us exercise them; for the sake of our salvation and in order not to be deprived of so great good[1] let us not stand idle. Woe is me when I consider him who hath robbed another, while that other might have given in alms that which he hath taken from him, since there are many who would give it in the name of God, if they had aught to give; and there are likewise many widows, and many married women who are compassionate, whose possessions have been seized by force, and they can not stretch out their hand to the poor, the bread having been snatched from their hand, and their blood having been sucked; likewise also there are many who have robbed the hospitals which give alms to the poor by lodging pilgrims, and perform other good works, and thou hast stolen that which would have been given to many poor, who thus have not had it. O what will God say to these? He will say not only: Thou didst see me hungry and thou gavest me not to eat, but also: thou hast stolen it from him who would have given it to me, and who can not give it to me. Thou hast been willing rather that the grain should rot in thy granary than that thou shouldst give it to the poor. Thou hast been more ready to give it to the dogs than to the poor. Likewise with thy wine; thou hast been willing that it should spoil, and then thou hast thrown it away rather than give it to a poor man who was dying of thirst. And what thinkest thou as well that he will say to these women who have seen a poor creature half naked,

[1] As is promised hereafter.

freezing with cold, while they have garments so ample that they spread over the ground, so long are they? Likewise of those who have sleeves so wide that they might clothe many poor people with them? Oh, how great a curse God will send upon thee for this! He will show himself unto them in wrath, with an awful visage, saying: Away, away! Ye cursed women who are of the devil, who have been ready to sweep up the highway with your garments rather than to give any of these to the poor. So likewise do I consider in regard of him who hath many beds in his house, so that he might lodge a poor man, but hath instead been willing to leave him by the roadside rather than receive him into his house. Likewise I consider what he will say to those who are rich in the goods of this world, who seeing a man who is sick, have not aided him, nor visited him, nor had compassion upon him. Ay me, how terrible a curse will light upon you too, as I believe! Again I reflect how many cruel men there are, who being owed five pence by some poor creature, have had him thrown into prison, and have let him waste away there, and would have his life rather than set him free alive! And alas, there is also wickedness even greater than theirs! What will the Lord say to him who hath taken from another all he doth possess, and then having had him seized and thrown into prison hath brought his wife to starvation and his children, having taken from them everything, and having thrown the poor wretch into prison and let him die there? Ay me, how great a curse will God send upon thee! As thou hast not shown mercy, so thou shalt not find it. Think not, however, that his judgment will not be full of mercy and justice, as fair and just as may be said. Doth it not seem fair to thee that the good man should be rewarded and the wicked man punished? Thou wilt judge thyself, be assured, when thou shalt see thy own works, all that which thou hast ever done. Seeing that which God commanded thee that thou shouldst do, and thou didst it not, what wilt thou say within thyself? Thou wilt say, perchance: He commanded me that which I was not able to do. Now consider for a little that which God doth command us. A very little thing doth he command us. He doth not command that thou shouldst give

more than thou canst give. He doth not wish that thou shouldst leave thyself with naught. He saith: Wouldst thou give an alms? Then give it. Canst thou not give a loaf? No? Then give a part of one. Canst thou not give wine? Then give some water which hath been poured over the lees. If thou canst not give even such wine, then give some vinegar mixed with water. Canst thou not clothe a poor man? No. Give him at the least, as perchance thou canst, a pair of drawers, or a shirt. Canst thou not aid the sick man? See that thou hast at least pity upon him: have compassion on him, comfort him with words. Canst thou not deliver him from prison? No. Visit him, send him sometimes a little soup, and have compassion for him. If thou dost take thought for this, it will be well for thee! And therefore do I say that God will judge with perfect justice.

God doth give thee that part which thou dost elect in thine own way, either life everlasting or hell.

2. — O rich man how grateful shouldst thou be to God, who hath given thee of these earthly goods in abundance. If thou dost live in ingratitude, not giving of these goods to him who hath need thereof, thou wilt be punished therefor. How easy a thing it is to attain to life everlasting. God hath imposed upon us his commandments, which are so easy of fulfilment that it is a joy to him who would observe them. Now consider this for a little: if God should say to thee, I wish to give thee eternal life, so I give thee this straw and I wish that thou shouldst give it to that man; if thou dost not give it to him, I will send thee to hell. If thou shouldst not be willing to give it to him, what thinkest thou he[1] will do unto thee? Knowest thou what he will do? He will send thee to hell. And is his the fault forsooth? He giveth unto thee that part which thou dost choose in thine own way, or life everlasting, or hell. Dost thou choose hell? Take thou the penalty thereof. Either to paradise or to hell thou must go; if thou didst not wish paradise, the worse for thee.

If God hath given to thee more than to that other man who is poor, be grateful and kind, and give unto him somewhat of this, for the love of God.

3. — O woman with great wide sleeves, if God should say to thee: have done with these great wide sleeves, if not, I will send thee to hell: and if thou shouldst nevertheless yet wish to wear them, shouldst thou not deserve

[1] God.

hell ? Woe is me ! Since thou wilt wear them. I would at least that they were not purchased with ill gotten gains ! O rich miser, why hast thou no compassion for the poor, why art thou so cruel to him that the hen showeth herself more charitable than thou art ? The hen, when solely four little kernels of corn are thrown to her, doth call the other hens, so that they as well may eat thereof. So likewise the mother hen, when she hath aught to eat, she calleth all the tiny chickens, most of all when there hath been given her a little meal. If no other argument doth move thee, this ought to move thee : It is God who giveth unto us all good things in this world and in the next. If he hath given unto thee so much bread that thou dost live in abundance, and if then he doth send to thy door a poor man who is dying of hunger, and if he doth let this man beg of thee for love of him, how art thou so ungrateful that thou givest him not thereof for the love of God ? He hath given thee much wine ; now he doth send that other, so that thou mayest give a little unto him. How canst thou send him away and not give him thereof? Likewise, he hath given thee money im abundance, now he sendeth thee a poor man, and doth let him beg for love of him that thou shouldst give him some. How comes it that thou art so unfeeling as to send him away empty ? That money belongeth to God.

Thou art bound to give to him who hath need thereof, that which thou hast in excess of thine own needs.

4. — Thou art bound to give to him who hath need thereof, and who is in want and distress, that which thou hast in excess. But when thou hast determined to live according to the spirit of God, see that thou dost not say : I would keep what is necessary for myself : if I should live to grow old, I could no longer earn, I need this for myself. O, what if I were to live two or three hundred years ? O, if I were to fall sick ? I wish to keep enough for my own needs. *Noli cogitare de crastino* Be not solicitous for to-morrow. Saith Saint Matthew that you should not be solicitous in regard of such things ; but if to-day thou seest that thou canst do something good, go thou and do it, — do not hold back from it ; and if thou canst manage so as not to live in so great splendour, do this as well. Do not as he doth who hath a capon before him, and saith : I would eat it all to-day so that I shall not have to say that

there is some of it left for to-morrow. I say not so; I say to thee that if thou hast goods in abundance, give thereof to him who is needy and in want. And that other saith: O, if I should give of my goods to whosoever doth cross my path, I should very soon scatter everything to the winds, and I myself should fall into such poverty as to be in want and need. I say not to thee that thou shouldst do in thiswise, in the name of God; I say to thee that thou shouldst give to him who is in want that which thou hast in excess of thine own needs; and moreover I do not say that thou shouldst give to all those who come to thee to beg; but to him who is needy, yes, and to him who is in want and in distress.

When thou givest an alms, give it cheerfully.

5. — When thou givest an alms, give it with cheerfulness. De always that which thou dost do for the love of God, that it may resound with cheerfulness, nor ever in a churlish spirit. Knowest thou why? Because it is said that *spiritus tristis dessicat ossa*, [1] Knowest thou the meaning of this? It meaneth that when the poor man cometh to thy door, and thou dost give him an alms with reluctance, in a churlish spirit, unwillingly, ere that thou art arrived at the door all the merit of that alms hath perished. Secondly, thou must do it cheerfully, in heart, in words, and in act, — first with inward willingness, secondly in thy words. When the poor man arriveth at thy door, and asketh alms for the love of God, — What? Yea, most willingly, be thou welcome. And this thou must show in giving cheerfully, from thy heart, with kind words, with a cheerful face and with promptness. Thou must show that thou dost give it willingly and cheerfully; do not weary him with waiting an hour before thou dost give it to him, since when that thou dost make him await it, the poor man doth almost repent that he hath asked thee for it. And therefore every time that it cometh in thy way to give, give promptly and cheerfully. And to the poor man is more welcome a glass of water given cheerfully and promptly, than a measure of wine, given with surliness and after long delay. Knowest thou how many women act? The poor man or the friar

[1] Proverbs XVII. 22 « A sorrowful spirit drieth up the bones. »

asketh an alms, and she saith: O wait there. And he will wait sometimes for half an hour, and finally when she hath made him weary with waiting she will then throw him a loaf from the window, and sometimes she will hit on the head with it. This in truth I can say from having had proof thereof: for when I was going about begging, a woman having thrown a loaf to me in that fashion, it lighted on my finger, and hurt me right grievously; she perchance did not give it to me willingly. And therefore I say to thee that thou shouldst give willingly, when a beggar cometh to thy house. Because this is commanded thee for the love of God, and see that thou dost bestir thyself with promptness.

A miracle which befell a generous giver of alms.

6. — O miserly old man, covetous old man, behold! already death hath thee in its clutches, and yet thou takest not thought for thy salvation. Seest thou not that thou hast already one foot in the grave? And what else dost thou await except death? Hearken, poor creature, see that thy path be lighted before thee, expect not that the light shall fall upon it from behind thee. When do most people give alms? Knowest thou when? When they find their heads upon the pillow, and then they can no longer live, and can not carry their possessions with them. These may be likened to the money-box from which one may never have the money which is within it, until that it is broken. So also may they be likened to a little child when he hath a pear, and doth bite it, and then doth give it to the mother; but before he was not willing to give it up and said: « Té, té! » Alack, wretched one, wait no longer! If thou seest a poor man, aid him, help him thou; expect not that another shall do a kindness for thee, since that thou thyself dost none. I would relate to thee an example of what befell a woman who was used to give alms. Once when she was in church, a poor man, half naked, asketh alms of her; and while the poor man was beseeching her, the priest was saying: *Sequentia sancti Evangelii.* She thinketh within herself: What shall I do? Shall I make him to wait, or shall I miss the Gospel? If I make him to wait, he will die of cold. When she had decided she went into a corner of the church, and took off the lining of her mantle and gave it to this poor man. Hearken to the miracle! She returneth to the

altar, — the priest was at the same word! And therefore follow that which is commanded thee, see that thou be prompt and ready.

When thou givest an alms, see that the evil beast vainglory be not within thee.

7. — When thou givest an alms, wish not to trumpet it abroad; as do many hypocrites, who when they give an alms give it out in the public squares, where there are many people, and in the streets as well, so as to be seen. Ofttimes they do take their stand at the corners of certain streets, and would appear to hide themselves, whereas they do it in order to be seen the more. Wouldst thou know such as these who they are? Take heed then of this, that it is their custom to have chapels built, and they put up their arms there, and labour an age before the work be finished. Such a one is having a chapel built in such a place, and there he hath put up his arms. What arms hath he put up there? That is not the arms which should be there. If thou shouldst put thy rightful arms there, thou wouldst put a gallows. Put a gallows there, and thou wilt do better.

XXX. *Likewise of alms, and of the utility and the fruit which he who giveth them doth derive therefrom.*

The right eye of Siena is the Duomo, and the left is the Hospital.

1. — For the instruction of him who would have his alms yield fruit, let him give it secretly, since this is one way whereby such an alms will be as a prayer to God for thee. Every one hath need that the good which he doth should come to the notice of God, to the end that he may receive the reward thereof in this and in the other world. But I may say with truth, that one man hath greater need thereof than another; and believe me, you are in greater need of it than many others. Nay, think not that I say this to make you fearful! It availeth little to arouse fear there where there is no need thereof. I see you grow strong in evil and weak in well-doing. Pay heed to this which I would say to thee, I say to you, and I believe, and I can put my finger upon it in many ways, and out of many reasons, that you should pray to God because of this, and beg him to be merciful unto you; and among the many reasons because of which you should pray to God you should pray above all because of this that follows. As you know, Messer Carlo hath of late been made your bishop, who is now Rector of the Hospital; and since you have so provided for the bishopric, you must now provide for the Hospital one in his stead [1]. For it you should find such a

[1] Messer Carlo Bartoli, « Rector » of the Hospital, had recently been made Bishop of Siena; he had been appointed by Pope Martin V. on the twenty seventh of September, 1427. Bartoli was both a pious priest and a fine citizen; he managed the Hospital of Siena for seventeen years, and left behind him there a high reputation. He was several times employed by the government of the Republic as « oratore » at The Court of Rome and was sent in the same capacity to other Italian principalities. Of humble origin he made himself known early in his life by his noble qualities of

one who will perform works that shall yield fragrance to God, and who will give the alms that should be distributed there in suchwise that the savour thereof may be sweet; and so shall he maintain that House in all things which are to the honour and glory of God. And since I travel hither and thither I hear that which is said forsooth. And would God that this your Hospital had still that fame which it had in the past. But know ye what I would repeat to you? I repeat to you that if therein that [1] is not still done which was used to be done, you will pay the penalty therefor. If you are not willing to provide therefor, you will suffer because of this. I say unto you again, that it is one of the eyes of your city, and the other eye is the Duomo, how well do they appear there side by side. The right eye is the Duomo, and the left is the Hospital; the nose is the piazza, which doth lie between them. Thou mayest see how long it is, like to a nose: fellow citizens, look to that Hospital: See to it that alms be given there unceasingly; see to it that this shall never fall off, for if that its alms diminish, woe to you all and believe that I speak the truth! The House is beautiful, and would be even more so if that which doth rightfully belong to it, had not been taken from it [2]. And as I say well of the Hospital so also do I say of the Duomo, both within and without, and it doth seem to me a thing devout. And if that I judge rightly, these Houses both belong to the Virgin Mary, and the city is said to be of the Virgin Mary, - and therefore be mindful of it out of regard for her glory. In respect of the House of the Hospital the alms which are given out from there

mind and heart, and by his success in the studies he elected to pursue; he was considered one of the most distinguished citizens of his age. He died September 11, 1444, and was buried in the Duomo. To understand the Saint's meaning here it is necessary to know that in accordance with a very old privilege which remained in existence down to our own time, the citizens provided for the bishopric by presenting as candidates, — first through the Council of the People, and later through that of the Commune, — three ecclesiastics, one of whom was appointed bishop. The nomination of Rector of the Hospital was in the same manner then and for many years afterwards in the hands of the civic authorities.

[1] I, e., those good works.

[2] The reference here is to the fact that the Republic obliged the Hospital to share the expense of repairing strongholds and maintaining guards in the surrounding country.

are most helpful; and therefore, I pray you, I pray you, that you will never permit them to diminish, for I believe that this may be one of the causes wherefor God will appease his wrath towards you.

Those who give alms bear a seal set upon them, so that God can never lose sight of them.

2. — Now pay heed to that which I will say to you. Hast thou children? When thou dost look at them, with what eye dost thou look? Thou lookest at them with the eye of the heart. With quite other love dost thou regard thy child than that of thy neighbour; thou regardest him with pleasant mien, for it seemeth ever that thou dost smile upon him. But tell me this: If thou lookest at the son of one to whom thou wishest not well, with what an eye dost thou look at him? Ugh, ugh! thou lookest at him with a stern eye, in thiswise, with a scowl. This is because thou wishest not so well to him as to thine own. In this same wise I mean doth God. God seeth us all, but in quite other fashion doth he look upon those who have his grace within them than as he looketh upon those who have it not. Those who have his grace within them, bear his seal, so that God can never lose sight of them. *Signavit nos Dominus, et dedit intuitus cordibus nostris* God hath sealed all those who are his, for within them he hath sent his grace; and he doth never abandon them, — God ever hath his eye upon them. Thinkest thou that he who giveth alms beareth a seal? Yes. O have I not told them that this is a virtue which is above all other virtues? All those who are charitable towards their neighbour for the love of God, all these are sealed. Every one who giveth an alms is not sealed, however, but those only who give with a kind manner, who give it from that which is their own, who give it to the poor; who give it out of pure and good intention, not with pomp and vainglory. And such as these [1] are known to God, because God doth not seal them. He doth seal only those sheep of his own flock, who are full of humility, and these doth he guide.

If thou wilt give alms, thou wilt be cured of every ill.

3. — Wouldst thou escape the death of the body, or the plague, or pain in thy side, or those infirmities which every day afflict thee? And thou, O woman, wouldst thou

[1] I. e., such as proclaim their almsgiving.

be delivered from pestilence, wouldst thou be cured of the evil which thou hast? Yes. Go then, and have recourse to almsgiving, for I promise thee that if thou shalt take the medicine which I tell thee of, thou wilt be cured of every ill. I would teach thee how to be cured of all the sickness that thou hast, or that could ever come upon thee. Wouldst thou have the proof that almsgiving will save thee from death? Turn to Tobias, the XII. chapter: *Elemosyna a morte liberat* Alms delivered thee from death; — from death of the body, I say. What? What? Do not make a mock of this: for if thou shalt be compassionate and wilt give alms, thou wilt find that thou wilt escape the death of the body. And I believe that almsgiving is the surest remedy that may be used.

How a blind woman because of her faith, received again the light of her eyes.

4. — Hearken, I wish to tell you an example which is to the point. We read of a woman who was blind and had spent all that she had that she might see the light, for she was very rich. Not having more to spend she was moved by God, and the thought came to her to go to Saint Hilarion, and she did so. When she had come to him, she said: I have spent that which I had in order that I might have the light of my eyes. I have given everything to physicians and for medicines, Then he doth point out to her how she might have done better than she had done; that if she had given to the poor of God that which she had given to physicians and for medicines, afflicted as she was, yet she would have been cured. Thereupon recognizing and seeing and believing that which he had said, and being now helpless in regard of what was past, she prayed to God that he would make her sound, though she could do naught else than repent because she had not done that which she would have done willingly. He seeing her so well disposed took a little spittle, and put it upon her eyes, and at once she was delivered from blindness. Solely because she felt sorrow in good and holy faith, was she made whole and received this grace from God.

Of a gardener who because he desisted from almsgiving God punished him grievously therefor.

5. — Another example, also suited to you, is of a gardener, who had made it a devout custom to give for love of God that which he had in excess of this own needs. Having done in thiswise for a long time, finally beginning

to grow old, he commenced to grow avaricious, saying within himself: I perceive in truth that now I am growing old. O if I give that which I have in excess, and then I should fall into need, not being able longer to earn money, what should I do? And it came into his mind to give no more, and he commenced to hoard for himself. And the matter standing thus, it seemeth that it was displeasing to God, who said: So then, thou hast lost faith in me, since thou deemest that I will not supply thy needs, and so thou dost abandon the poor in order to hoard thy money. I promise thee that thou shalt spend it with great pain, since that thou wilt no longer give it in alms. And thereupon he doth send him a most grievous ailment in his foot. The man out of the wish to be cured doth commence to spend his money for physicians and medicines, and so much did he spend by little and little that he found himself without money, but still with the ailment. Worse yet: for the physician coming to him said to him: knowest thou what must needs be done if thou wouldst live? Thy foot must be cut off. Then grieving because of the ill that he had and because of the ill that he foresaw in losing his foot, he said meanwhile: Woe is me! to be cured I have spent that which I had, and now if I would live, my foot must needs be cut off! He could not find peace. Finally he replied to the physician: for the sake of living I am content to live as I may. Come to morrow morning when you will, and have all your instruments prepared and in readiness, so that I shall not have to suffer too much. What befell? The following night the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, saying to him: O such a one, how dost thou? He replied: Oh, how do I? Very ill, for if I wish to be cured, my foot must needs be cut off, and I await the physician, who will come to-morrow morning to cut it off. Thereupon the Angel revealed to him why this ailment had come upon him, saying to him: God doth send thee this ailment because thou didst abandon the almsgiving which thou hadst entered upon, and didst begin to hoard and to lose faith in God, deeming that he would abandon thee. And because this was displeasing to God he hath sent thee this ailment; and for this hast thou suffered so great bodily pains, and afterwards hast thou spent that

which thou hadst amassed. For if thou hadst persevered in the way which thou hadst undertaken, it would not have befallen thee thus. Then the man, reflecting upon the good which he used to perform at first, and the evil which he had done in not continuing it, with repentance and weeping commenced to pray to God most devoutly that he would make him whole, promising that he would return again to doing that good which he had done, and as much more as should be possible to him. Thereupon the Angel made the sign of the cross upon his foot, and straightway he was made sound. The physician who arrived in the morning to cut off his foot came to him, saying to him: Come, let us be about it! Said he: Know you not that God hath regarded me? The ailment hath endured only so long as my money. I have emptied my purse and I am cured. God doth temper the wind to him whose garments suffice not. The ailment endured only so long as I had money to spend; I have no more to spend, and I have the ailment no longer. Do you understand this, O thou who dost hoard thy money? Do you understand it?

Of a barber, a very generous giver of alms, to whom God gave great prosperity.

6. — I think you have never found anyone who was used to give alms who ever fell into poverty because of the alms which he had given. If you can tell me even of one, then may you say that I am in the wrong. I speak not of him who doth despoil himself of the world in order to serve God, instead I speak of one who wisheth to live honourably in the world following good customs. For I remember a barber who took counsel with his own heart and decided for the love of God to give to the poor the tenth part of that which he earned; out of every ten pennies to give one, and so he did, and provided for himself for a long time, as I have heard, and his possessions continued to multiply. How thinkest thou that I know this? Because when I had gone away from that city where this man was used to do as I tell thee, I returned there again after six years, and asking him how he fared, when I went to be shaved of him, as I knew him very well, he replied that he fared very well, and that he had a fine family, and that he had much property; and he said to me that he was most happy and that he had a very beautiful house, wherein he dwelt,

and which was well furnished with all that was needful, and that he gave in alms as he had used to do, the tenth part of what he earned ; telling me moreover that he had more than he needed, and he knew not how it was that things were so prosperous as God allowed them to be, since that he was going ever forward from good to better ; that whatsoever he touched it seemed as if it turned into gold for him. And why thinkest thou that this was so ? I tell thee for no other reason than because of his almsgiving. Because that saying is always verified : *Date et dabitur vobis* Give, and it shall be given unto you.

He who is used to give alms, his riches ever increase.

7. — If thou wishest that thy riches should multiply, make it a practice to give alms. Knowest thou how to perform this almsgiving, O thou who dost amass and hoard as thou dost the very dung outside the gate ? Be assured that in this dung there will never come up wheat. Knowest thou why ? Because it is heaped up ; if thou shouldst spread it out and scatter it, this would not be so. Go, and spread it out and scatter it over ground that is poor, and sow seed therein, and thou wilt see what fruit it will yield to thee. A mystery ? Nay this is most plain and clear. O thou who hast great riches, and dost keep these all heaped up, never shalt thou find the amount increased, never will they yield fruit. O thou who hast heaps of wheat, never will the amount of it increase, if thou scatter it not upon that poor ground, among those who are poor and needy. If thou shalt scatter it, thou wilt find that it will yield thee much fruit. Scatter it never upon rich ground, for if thou shalt scatter it there, if the wheat shall grow up, it will droop when it shall be grown, and thou wilt have no good of it. Wouldst thou know the contrary of this ? Then consider the rich man who is avaricious ; if thou find not that in a brief time his goods shall have diminished, then say that I am sadly in the wrong. Think upon this for a little to see whether one come not into thy mind ; I promise thee that I have given thee somewhat to reflect upon. Thinkest thou that it hath never happened so to any one ? Perchance, yes. It hath befallen because of this alone, that they have been avaricious in regard of the riches which God hath given unto them in order that they should give them to the poor ;

and not having wished to give thereof, God hath withdrawn his hand and hath taken these from them. If they had been givers of alms this would not have befallen them. God doth this out of his wise judgment. Knowest thou how God doth in regard of the man who giveth alms, and who doth ask God for riches in order to give thereof to the poor for love of him, — either when he is in need of something, or to marry his daughters or whatsover other need it may be? Always doth he provide for him. And what thinkest thou he doth ofttimes do to the rich man? He doth as doth the woman to her little boy, who when he wishes a thing she doth give it to him: when he cries she will put the fig into his hand, for she knoweth that it will be harmful to him if he shall eat it. She doth not give it to him so that he may eat it, — nay but to pacify him; and when he is pacified, she saith to him: My baby son, give me this fig, give it to me, my little tiny child, give it to me, if thou givest it not to me, I will no longer be thy Mamma; give it to me, my sweeting. If the child giveth it to her, then doth she say: Oh, thou art a good little boy! oh, now thou art mine own little son! If he doth not give it to her, but doth begin to cry instead, then she saith: Nay then, away with thee! for thou shalt not be my little son, away, away with thee! Now in thiswise doth God to him who is poor and who doth ask of God the goods of this world in order to give them to the poor for love of him; straightway God doth give him thereof in abundance, and doth make him rich. Cometh the poor man, and doth go to him for that of which he hath need, that is to say, for the fig, as doth the mother. If thou dost give it him, then God saith to thee: Oh, thou art mine own good son, I will be thy father! If thou dost not give it to him, then doth he drive thee away from him, saying: Away! depart from me, for thou art not my son!

Desire not that God should give thee either money or aught else, if this is not best for thee.

8. — Many are there, as I have said to thee, who the more they give, the more they find. Others there are whom this doth befall instead, for it is seen to happen, and one or another saith that he hath proved it, and saith he: I give away a florin, and when I look into my purse, or through my house, or into my money-chest, I do not find

therein either ten, or a hundred, or a thousand, as thou dost tell me I shall. In like manner saith she who hath given a pair of linen sheets to the prisoners; she saith: I do not find myself with ten of them, or with a hundred, or a thousand. Wouldst thou have me answer thee? Knowest thou why thou findest not ten of them, nor a hundred, nor a thousand? Because this doth rest with thee, it is not to be laid to God forsooth. Every time that thou dost well God doth reward thee, or will reward thee therefor. If thou dost ask of God that he will give thee so much for every one of those that thou givest, he seeth, and doth that which is most profitable to thee: he doth endeavour to bring thee to paradise. Desire not that he should give thee either money or aught else if this is not best for thee. Trust to him, for thou, because thou dost not understand, mightest ask him for hell. So then every time that thou dost ask him for aught, say: if it is best; he will give it to thee if it shall be best, and if not, he will not give it to thee.

Of that which Jesus said to Saint Peter.

9. — But let us now consider that which Jesus said to Saint Peter. What said he to him? I will restore it to thee an hundred-fold. Now let us hear what thou thinkest the net cost, and the little boat? I believe that it cost less than ten florins; let us say that it cost twenty. What hath he restored to him? Tell me: what is the cost of *San Pietro Ovile* or of *San Pietro in Castelvecchio?*[1] Eh, forsooth! it cost far more than the net and the little boat. Or, better: what is the cost of Saint Peter's at Rome? Go, reckon the cost thereof. Dost thou think it cost more than a thousand times as much as those things which he left? And as I say of Saint Peter, so do I say of the others. Let us consider Saint Francis, poor and humble as he was, who left everything, that which he had, and that which he might have had. He might perchance have had a wife, perchance two, perchance three or four; he might have had three or four children, he might perchance have had two or three houses. Now see what God gave him, who had left and abandoned everything out of love for him. Consider: how much doth it seem to

[1] These are two of the very oldest churches in Siena.

thee that he hath restored to him? Doth it not seem to thee that he hath restored unto him everything? How many are the sons of Saint Francis, thinkest thou? O o-o h! They are so many that they are to be found in every part of the world, there are some even among the Saracens. The number of them is so great that it is a marvel. Likewise how many daughters thinkest thou he hath? He hath many thousands. How many are the houses of his sons? On every side have they dwellings. Thou seest then that he hath forsaken little and gained much. And forsooth how many are those who to-day leave that which they have in the world and follow the life of Jesus for love of him, and who then receive so much that they are lords of everything in the world, - they are lords of the world? Long live the Lord of the World! Since those think themselves blessed who can send him his horses whenas he walketh in the way. He calleth himself blessed who can have him in his house to dine. Thinkest thou not that such as these are lords of the world? They have trampled underfoot everything for love of Jesus, who hath promised them finally life everlasting, and he who goeth into life everlasting hath received more than a thousand-fold.

XXXI. *The prophet David, searching for peace in this world, found it not.*

David searching in the things of this world, in each one singly, to find whether there was peace in these, in the end found that there was not true solace and happiness therein.

1. — I think that David was one of the men most given to contemplation that the Church of God hath had. Whenever I consider him I am amazed. If thou wilt weigh and consider his deeds, his ways, thou wilt see that from everything he was used to draw fragrance and savour. When he was in those most sweet and solacing meditations ofttimes did he taste of life everlasting; because for all that he was in mortal life he soared so high aloft in thought that he heard and saw the glories of eternity; although all the while he was at war with the flesh, which tormented him and was ever against him. Hence because of the warfare that he had within him, between the flesh and the spirit, he said in thought: Alàs! shall I never depart from this body, which draweth me down to the things of the world, and follow my spirit, which draweth me upwards to things divine? Could I but forsake these visible things, which are vain, and go to see those invisible ones, which are stable! And not perceiving the means nor the way thereto, he commenced to weigh and to consider these temporal things in order to comprehend thereby things that change not; these visible things, in order to comprehend things invisible. And if thou lookest well into this which I have said to thee in brief, if thou hast ever so little good sense thou wilt see therein things the noblest and sweetest, and the most solacing which thou hast ever seen in this life. Thou shalt see in truth whither we shall arrive. He was ever pondering upon all the things of the world, to see whether in any one he might find peace and repose so that his spirit might be at rest,

and likewise his body as well, that they might be brought into accord, for they were always at war together, and having considered many things, he found in no one of these that true happiness which he desired.

That happiness which David sought was not to be found in possessions because he saw therein great toil in amassing them and no rest whatsoever.

2. — O thou who dost amass riches and dost hoard them, and dost never feel thyself satisfied, Ah! rather take David as thy guide, who sought to go in search of paradise. as Dante took Virgil to be his guide out of his desire to see hell. O thou there who sleepest [1], learn this morning, and stay awake, that thou mayest not fall into evil, thinking to go to paradise, and perchance thou wilt go to hell. Oh, oh, oh! When I but think how great toil I see in the heaping up and the gathering together of these possessions! I see therein great toil with much sweat! I see therein waking and watching. I see therein vexation of mind. I see therein many cares and many sorrows: I know that ofttimes he who doth heap up riches is hungry, that he doth suffer thirst and cold, and heat beyond measure. Thou goest now hither now thither; thou dost pass now over the sea, now across the land; thou art abroad in rain, and snow, and wind, thou stayest never at home in thine own house; in regard of thy possessions, of thy vineyards, everywhere, and in regard of all that in which thou hast been solicitous. thou sufferest ever grievous vexation. Ay me! how sorry a thing is it to find instead of rest only vexation, which ceaseth not. Never dost thou find thyself satisfied; now thou dost dispose this in one manner and that in another manner, and thou never hast repose, and all this doth befall because thy greed can not be satisfied, it is never content, and would never say: enough! it coveteth ever more and more.

When thou hast got thyself belongings, thou dost possess them in fear and dread.

3. — Now add together these three things: first, if thou dost get them, thou dost get them with much sweat, and with vexation, and sorrow. If then in the end thou leavest them, grievous vexation and sorrow and distress! so that if thou dost get them, if thou dost possess them, if thou leavest them, in every way shalt thou have vexation and sorrow. And one man who had much money, and was old, in order that it should not be stolen from him, did

[1] Here he addresses someone who was napping during the sermon.

therewith as doth the cat with her kittens, — he hid it, one day here, the next day there; now he buried it in the stall, now he put it in the meal, now in the wheat, now among the beans; and he had moved it here or there so many times that in the end he could not remember where he had put it, and he went about searching for it and weeping. And wherefore weepest thou? And he was unwilling to tell, out of shame, and out of sorrow as great as if it had been taken from him, because he was fearful lest he might not find it; but when at the point of death he leaveth it, oh, thou mayest know when thou seest him close tight his fists, how great is his sorrow! Thou must needs leave it, in suchwise that thou mayest give no further thought to that money of thine. It is not as if it had been stolen from thee, at least then perchance thou mightest think: At some time it will be given back to me. Or if thou shouldst lose it, thou mightest hope some day to find it again. Or if indeed I shall not be able to have it in anywise, I will gather more together! When death is the question the matter standeth not thus; for then when thou leavest it well mayest thou say: O money of mine, I look not ever to see thee again. Ay me, my money, I know not how I can part from thee!

If thou dost consider him who pursueth after the delights of this world, but for a little do they endure ere that they fail him.

4. — O crazed-headed madmen, and you too, madwomen, who believe that you can exist forever amid the delights of the world, thou knowest when thou hast so great delight that thou art out of thyself for joy; — when thou goest into the country for thy disport, when thou goest to feasts where they dance and sing, when thou goest to those gatherings where they do never aught else than dance and feast, he who is there doth find himself amid continual delights. Now take heed that under these delights there are hidden many sharp thorns! Now consider them. If thou dost consider him who pursueth after the delights of this world, but only for a very little do they endure, ere that they diminish for him, without that he doth perceive it. Look closer yet into them, to see whether this be true, O young man who hath married a wife of late, — and to thee too I speak, O woman who hath taken a husband of late, — art thou here present, O thou who art newly wed? Yes. Is

there here any who is awaiting a wife? Yes. Hearken, consider the woman for a little when she goeth to the house of her husband. Thou wilt see when she goeth to the house of her husband she goeth set upon a horse, all decked out, with much music, and in great triumph; she doth bear herself proudly as she passeth by the way, and flowers are scattered all along the road. She is dressed up with many ornaments, with silvern stripes and with gewgaws; — her fingers are covered with rings; she is painted and anointed; her hair is all adorned and well combed; she weareth garlands of silver acorns on her head, she hath a head-dress of linen; and on every side doth she glitter with gold. She is set high upon a horse in so great triumph that never hath the like thereof been seen. O how high dost thou not seem to thyself to have mounted! Oh, oh! Then doth she arrive at the house of her husband, — she is received with great rejoicing. Often spelt is put upon her head, — and so do they show that thou art a beast. And at the end of three days her husband, it doth seem, is frantic and mad with love of her. Go forward. And at the end of eight days doth she celebrate the repetition of the feast; see that this cometh as soon as may be! During all this time it is usual for the feasting to endure. But even for such as these within a very little their joy doth diminish, — but a brief time doth it endure; however she may be, soon doth her happiness forsake her. If she is beautiful, at once doth her husband grow jealous of her; in like manner, if he is a handsome youth, she doth grow jealous of him, and thus she entereth straightway upon sorrow and vexation, so that within a little time, a very little time forsooth, the matter standeth in suchwise that naught of that which she doth put into her mouth seemeth good to her. More than this: if she findeth there stepchildren, and she hath no love for them, she can scarce bear that they should have aught to eat. And they are ofttimes so knowing as to perceive that she wisheth them not well, and they would not have her eat anything. If she findeth a daughter-in-law there already, or if one come there after her advent, there will be soon an end of peace and concord. Oh, oh, oh! if the mother-in-law is there, I would say no more to thee thereof! thou knowest

it full well of thyself. An end to peace! All too brief was thy moment of happiness! What next? Let us say now that she is ugly, her husband wisheth her not well; and if he is ugly, she wisheth not well to him. Let us say that they are both beautiful, but that neither one doth wish the other well; they are not rich, they lack worldly possessions, they are in need. If they happen by chance to be rich, then the man is engaged in some lowly occupation, is of humble birth, and of poor condition [1]; he is disregarded, he is not acceptable to anyone. Another may be of high parentage, and he will not own so much in the world as the cost of a good pair of trousers, and he would far rather be of poor condition and have a little wealth, in order to take his place in the world, so that he might be held in esteem. Thou seest that neither in one estate nor in the other is he content. Another may be rich and of high lineage, and may have a beautiful wife, and may himself be handsome, but he may not be able to have children: and he would rather have fewer possessions and have children instead, and he doth fret and distress himself because he seeth a poor man who hath many beautiful children, and he doth grudge them to him; that for all that thou seest him who hath the dish of good macaroni before him, nevertheless the fly hath fallen therein; thou wilt not eat it so tranquilly, the fly hath fallen therein! Another may be rich, young, beautiful, and of high parentage, and he hath children; but his wife is so contentious that he findeth no peace with her. Oh, this man is jealous because his wife is a beautiful young woman! and in like manner, she, hearing the least little noise in the house, even though it may be the cat, straightway doth suspicion enter her mind; and if he is in bed, she doth arise and doth search the whole house diligently, and looketh to see whether the door be locked, and oft out of her suspicion she doth scatter ashes there to see whether anyone entereth thereat. Such a woman out of her jealousy even sealeth the door. Again, another man may have each and all of these things: he may have a beautiful wife, and he may be a handsome youth; he may be rich

[1] I. e; coming from some poor little village.

and of high parentage, he may have children, a wife who is good, and young, and who is not jealous of him; but he doth not hold any high office, and this will so grieve him that he will envy all those who hold offices of state. And therefore thou seest then in nowise can any one be content here: one doth lack one thing, one another; in every estate or condition in which thou findest thyself thou wilt find the fly in the macaroni, and thou canst not eat it without some discomfort. And therefore because of this do I say that all these things deceive thee, because thou canst never find true happiness in them.

Do not love the world, for naught therein is stable.

5. — Tell me, O ye old men who were once young, and who did many things in your youth all of which did displease God, what is left to thee of thy youth? Naught! What is left to thee of all thy wantonness of which thou wast guilty? What is left to thee of that beauty of thine which was so great? What is left to thee of that strength which thou hadst so that thou foundest never anyone who could overcome thee? What is left to thee of thy pride because of which thou hadst so great pleasure in being decked out with ornaments and richly dressed? And thou, O woman, what is left to thee of that beauty which thou didst appear to have when thou didst paint thyself in so many ways, all contrary to the commandment of God? What is left to thee of thy greediness, thy love of eating and drinking so sumptuously? And likewise of drinking so many delicate and delicious wines? Knowest thou what is left to thee of all this? Naught is left to thee but the sin thereof. Search out thy conscience diligently, and thou wilt see that I speak the truth: that which thou hadst in those days now is naught else than smoke. Consider these youths and maidens, and take note that time doth flee them, and how they lose their energy, esteem, their strength and prowess; and that all enjoyment doth forsake them and doth leave them full of cares and distress, ugly, quarrelsome and in every way displeasing. All their strength doth fade away as doth smoke, or as by little and little doth vanish the foam on a glass of wine, or as doth the shadow when that which doth cast the shadow is removed from before the sun, since when thou takest man from the earth so dost thou take away the

shadow which he did cast. O youths and maidens, you possess that which the aged no longer have; so say I to you, old and young alike: you know that you can never turn back; if thou art old, thou wilt never return again to be a young man. So say I to you, O woman! never wilt thou return again to be a young girl, to be beautiful, full of grace, strong, as once thou wast. If thou hast lived an evil life thou canst well amend thyself by turning back from off the road of ill-doing; but in regard of thy age thou canst never turn back. When thou reachest the age of eighteen, then art thou strong, fresh, jocund, gay, and that age is called the flower of thy life, and it endureth for thee until thy thirtieth year. In all the time that thou art in this life, no age is fairer and more jocund than that one and therefore doth David call it the flower. Pass thy thirtieth year, and then doth commence the approach of evening, which is at the age of forty, and there come to him many of its ambassadors: Messer Hoaryhead, and also other like messages. He passeth forty and doth arrive at his sixtieth year, and he doth commence to grow shrunken and stooped; his eyes run with humour, and they are scarlet about the rims, which hang down and droop over; he walketh with head bent downward towards the ground; he groweth deaf, he seeth but ill the light of day; he groweth toothless. He arriveth at his seventieth or at his eightieth year, and he commenceth to shake, and to nod his head, and doth in thiswise [1]. And there is said to him: Hast thou never done aught that is good? And he shaketh his head in thiswise, and by that doth say, No. And wilt thou never do any good? Again doth he reply to thee with a nod in like manner. If he hath lived a good life and there is said to him: Hast thou given bad example by thy actions? he doth reply in that same manner, and saith, No. Wouldst thou do any evil? Again he saith, No. If he hath been wicked there is said to him: Wilt thou never be good? And he doth shake his head and doth answer, No. In sum, ask him whatsoever thou wilt, he doth reply that he will

[1] The Saint here imitates the tremulous shaking of head and limbs of a very old man.

never do good and will never be good. Hast thou lived a good life? No. And in thiswise shalt thou die. A glass of wine is given to him, and he taketh it, and his hand doth tremble, and he doth spill half of it before he can put it to his lips; and after that he hath put it to his lips, he commenceth to drink, and the slaver doth drip therein. So in like manner when he hath his pottage, and he putteth the bread into his mouth, because of his tremulousness he doth all besmear his mouth and his chin. When thou speakest to him, he being deaf is like one dazed. Thou dost ask him one thing and he doth reply to thee concerning another; and so doth he arrive at his end, and like as he hath lived, so in like manner doth he die. If he have lived a good life, all is well; but if he have lived an evil life, then woe to him! And if now he be ill-treated here, he will suffer even worse treatment there. [1] And if he hath been slack and negligent, wicked and dissolute, and hath not feared God, no one then wisheth to have aught to do with him, neither kinsmen nor friends; — to no one is the sight of him welcome, he is hateful to all alike. So in the same manner will it happen to him in the life beyond: neither God nor the saints will have compassion on him, and thereby doth it befall that he forfeiteth all the happiness which might have been his if he had lived a good life, and thus his soul finds its way to the home of the accursed.

Friar Bernardine recommends his disciple Friar Albert to the Sienese.

6. — Before I go further I must needs speak a little of somewhat else. This is the season in which thrushes are lured by the call and are snared with lime. It seemeth to me as if these women had caught me in the snare, since I can not depart from you, — for I must preach to-morrow, and this will be a sermon concerning the Angels, a most sweet and pleasant subject; and on Saturday I must preach at home, [2] a sermon about Saint Francis, so then you will come here on Sunday. Do not lose it even for money, — I will preach in this selfsame place. Now with the help of blessed Jesus, let no one move, so that our sermon may not be disturbed. And remember that to-morrow you must not

[1] In the other world.
[2] See footnote, p. 155.

work, because this is commanded by Holy Church; and I warn you that whosoever shall gather in grapes to-morrow for the vintage, the devil will carry him away; and whosoever shall pour out the wine from the jars, the devil will dwell in the house wherein he dwelleth. Now lay this up in your mind. Although I have been prayed very earnestly that I should preach here during this Lent, yet I wish it to be as if naught of this had ever been said: [1] See to it that you have Friar Albert; whom you say I have not even mentioned. [2] Oh, he is the most affable son that I have! This I say, for if any one shall come hither and shall say: I am a disciple of Friar Bernardine, do not believe him, if you know not with certainty that I write it to you with my own hand, for I know well that which Bertha spun. [3] I know my sheep, as said Christ. Home again! [4]

See that thou be ever one of those who seek peace.

7. — It is so useful a thing, this peace! It is so sweet a thing, even the very word itself, — peace, — that it doth impart a sweetness to the lips! Look at its contrary, — say: War! It is so harsh a thing as to produce a roughness which doth irritate the mouth! In truth you have her painted up there in your Palace [5] in suchwise that it is a pleasant thing to see Peace painted there. And likewise it is dismal to see War painted on that other side. Do not be ever willingly the occasion of war nor of hate, nor of enmity, but be rather the occasion of peace, of love, and of concord. Dost thou remember that youth who wished to go to the University, and having a father he said to him: Hearken, father, I pray that you will give me permission to go to acquire learning and virtue. And the father knowing that enmity and hatred were the worst of all things, said to him: My son, if thou wouldst have me give thee permission to go to acquire learning, I would have thee make me a promise

[1] Lest another might be offended hearing that he had been invited after Saint Bernardine.

[2] In enumerating his favourite disciples.

[3] See footnote, p. 97.

[4] See footnote, p. 8.

[5] He is speaking here of the *Sala dei Nove*, called afterwards *Sala della Pace* from a wonderful painting of Peace by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, which makes this great hall one of the most beautiful in the world. On another wall of the hall Lorenzetti painted War.

never to quarrel with thy neighbour. The son replied: My father, I promise that I will never engage in a quarrel which shall have arisen through my fault. Said the father: No, no! I am not willing that thou shouldst go thither. Away! put back the horse in the stable. Saith the son: Oh, father mine, why art thou not willing that I should go thither? Knowest thou why? replied the father, because thou art not fitted for it. Thou wouldst not obey me in that which I have commanded thee. Thou sayest to me that thou wilt never have a quarrel with anyone which ariseth through thy fault; and I would not have thee take part in one whether it doth arise from thee or from another. And solely because of this reply he did not allow him to go to study. Thus do I say to thee, O fellow-citizen; seek not quarrels and discords; if thou shouldst see clearly that it will come about through another man, yet see that thou dost not take it up. Swallow it, swallow it all.[1] Keep no angry word on the tip of thy tongue. See that thou have the long throat of the goose. If thou wouldst go about seeking enmity and hatred, do not so, I say. But rather shouldst thou close thy eyes than wish to see that which may be harmful to thy soul, arousing hatred therein; for if thou shalt go in search thereof, thou wilt find greater evil than thou wouldst wish to find. Who goeth in search of evil doth find it perforce; if thou shalt seek hatred, God will send it to thee. And therefore every time thou dost go in search thereof, thou wilt go always from bad to worse. When thou seest a thing which displeaseth thee go thy way, with Godspeed! Give no further thought to it, as: O how went it? What did he? See that thou dost turn thy back upon it, Know how to carry thyself towards good and bad, towards worse, and worst of all; and make it possible for thyself to have to do with all alike. Live together peaceably, and wish not to ruin one another, but all of you love one another. If forsooth there be one who wisheth war, wish it not thou. Flee it! See that thou be always one of those who seek peace, — peace with men, peace within thine own soul, and peace with God. See to it that every thought of

[1] I. e., the insult, and thy wrath.

thine, thy every act, thy every deed, all be directed towards peace. Hence saith David, for thy instruction: *Rogate quae ad pacem sunt,* — pray to God for your city that it may be ever at peace and in unity. Wouldst thou have me say that I think there is in very sooth great need that thou shouldst pray therefor? For carrying yourselves as you now do you can not avoid war, as a man can not escape hunger if he doth not eat. And this will come to pass solely because there is not peace and unity among you; you are not in accord with one another. I shall go away and shall grieve therefor; if this and worse come upon you, I am not guilty of this that I did not warn you thereof, for I have left naught unsaid. I say that this is a thing whereby you do provoke God to wrath.

Thou who seekest not peace art reprehensible even in the eyes of infidels.

8. — O thou who hast been already forty years amid war and enmity, and hast never wished to make peace, nay, tell me, what thinkest thou that thou art doing now? Alas! dost thou never take thought for thy soul, which hath been all this time in a state of mortal sin? Dost thou not reflect that thou art now old, that all thy time is spent, of which thou wilt have then to render an account? In what condition wilt thou go before the Supreme Judge? Wilt thou go there with hatred in thy heart? O poor wretch, if thou hast no fear of that which will befall thee, if thou pardon not, I promise thee that thou shalt go to find him who hath done thee the injury. I speak now for the benefit of thy city. Knowest thou what should be done to such as these? A law should be made whereby all those who should not be willing to make peace, should be banished out of the city, and should be considered as rebels, seeing that they are unwilling to return into the right way of the commandments of God. And in thiswise should it be done in regard of those who are so hostile to things peaceable that they suffer not peace to be made. Thou hearest many who eject poisonous venom, saying that a man doth debase himself if he make peace with one who hath injured him. Alas! hast thou never thought of that which God did? Was God then cowardly? Was it cowardice in him when he pardoned those who had offended him? Oh, he never sought else than peace! He seeketh ever to pardon the sinner. Woe to

us if he should not pardon us! O seest thou not, if thou art a Christian, that God doth command that thou shalt love thy enemy and pray for him, and do good to him? How much better should we do than the pagans! As I told thee at another time the pagans were once so firmly resolved not willingly to hate anyone, that when an injury had been done to them they would say: Thou wouldst not be able to endure my anger;[1] and no one was able to do them an injury so great that it could rouse hatred in them. Thou, therefore, O Christian, what art thou about, thinkest thou? Thou art reprehensible in the eyes of the infidels; thou art reprehensible in the sight of Christ, of the Church, and in thine own conscience; each and all cry out to thee: Peace! and therefore I pray thee, and warn thee, and command thee in the name of God that thou show forgiveness. Oh! thou hast so many examples of those who have chosen to be obdurate, and have not been willing to forgive, that you ought to tremble with fear, lest God should send his judgment upon you. Ay me, wait not his vengeance! pardon thine enemy for the love of the Lord, who doth command thee to pardon him.

Friar Bernardine calls them to the Church of San Martino and to the Duomo.

9. — Women, that which you did not do the last time, do it now this time: when you leave the sermon and go home, see that you go into San Martino, entering thus by the Porrione,[2] and let this going into the church be to show that you are at peace with every one; and present this peace[3] and offer it up in the church, all who can enter therein. And then when you find yourselves together there with those towards whom you have borne hatred, you will set yourselves in peace with one another, and see that naught more remain to be done in respect of this. And if you can not all enter therein, pass across the Piazza as a sign that you offer and will accept peace, and see that you

[1] That is, if I were to allow myself to grow angry; therefore I will restrain my anger.

[2] The ancient name of the street which leads from the Piazza to the church of *San Martino*. This church is mentioned in records of the sixth century. It belonged first to the Canons Regular of the Lateran, then to the *Leccetani*. Pius II. consecrated it in 1460. It was rebuilt in 1357 according to the plan of *Giovambattista Peloro*. To-day it is a parish church.

[3] I. e., to God.

take thought for your own safety; if there are women among you who are with child, do not bring yourselves or the infants you have conceived, within danger of injury. Likewise do I say to you, O men, go, and offer up peace to the Virgin Mary in the Duomo, in order that she may preserve you in peace, and may protect you from those dangers which threaten you while that you have hatred in your hearts. And then when you shall find yourselves there together with those to whom you bear hatred, you will set yourselves in peace with one another. Now see to it that naught may remain to be done in respect of this.

Of an accursed old woman who would not pardon a youth who had hurt her foot unwittingly.

10. — In 1419 there went to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem a galley, wherein among the rest there was a little old woman, one of those accursed haughty ones, who was seated there within, whosoever hath been in a galley will understand how. She was sitting thus, with her legs stretched out; and a young boy who also was a pilgrim, as he was passing through the galley it chanced that he touched this woman's foot and hurt her a little, and he could not prevail upon her to pardon him for all that he did and said, since she would pardon him in no manner. Finally when they were arrived in Jaffa, where these pilgrims disembarked, this young boy asked pardon of her again and again; she still remained obdurate, not being willing to pardon him. Unable therefore to obtain her pardon he went as is usual to the dwelling-place of the friars, where all must make their confession before they go to see those holy places, and when they have made their confession, straightway they receive communion. He having confessed all his sins, and having told how by ill chance and unwittingly he had hurt this woman, and that he had asked pardon of her again and again, and that she had been unwilling to pardon him, — he was told that he must return to her and must ask pardon of her before he received Communion. And doing so, when he came to her, he said to her: Mother, I pray you, for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who willed to be crucified for the love of all sinners who have offended him, Ah! I pray you that you pardon me the injury that I did to you; it was done through mischance, I did it not with evil intent; for the love of

God I ask thee pardon for it. In the end, he having besought her vehemently, she not being willing to listen to him drove him away, saying to him: I will not pardon thee. Finally not being able to have a kind word from her, he returned to his confessor, and told him how he had not had a gentle answer. Again the confessor wished that he should return to her a second time, and should ask pardon of her. And he did so. Having returned to her, and having asked pardon of her for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, again she drove him away, saying that she would never pardon him. The boy returned the second time to the confessor, and told him how she had driven him away as she had done the first time. The friar wished that he should go back to her again a third time. As she had done before so she did the third time, saying that she wished to hear naught ever again concerning pardon. Wherefore when he returned for the last time to the friar and told him how the matter stood, the friar said to him: Go, and receive the most holy body of Christ, seeing that thou hast done all that which thou shouldst on thy part; go and receive communion, and perform thy acts of devotion. Ooooh! Oh, what a horrible thing there befell! O judgment of Great God! O what came of this? When this youth was at the altar, as he received the body of Christ, straightway at the same moment the devil entered into her. There was a little cistern in the centre of the church, and therein was she cast alive by devils, and scarce could anyone pass through into it even with difficulty, so small was it! No one saw her thrown into it, but a great noise was heard, and as she could not be found, it was most clear and plain to be seen that she had made that noise. And when they saw that she was missing, then straightway they ordered hooks to be brought, and tried whether they could find her; and having hooks of such a kind as to find that body, they found it and drew it forth; and they thought that in truth the devil had thrown her in there, considering how slight was the injury which had been done to her, and that it had been done unwittingly, and seeing with how great humility the boy had asked pardon of her, and considering where she was, that is, in a holy and devout place, where the Lord

of Heaven and Earth had willed to endure so great suffering for the salvation of sinners who will return to him. And this was shown when he said to the Eternal Father: *Pater, dimitte illis, quia nesciunt quod faciunt* Ah, my Father, forgive these men who crucify me, for they know not what they do. And in truth considering this example, he who will not forgive may well be in very great fear. Women, valiantly out by the Porrione! And you, valiant men, into the Duomo!

XXXII. *How we ought to love God, and how he took farewell of the people.*

Friar Bernardine in this sermon closes the mouth of the sack.

1. — I wish to preach a sermon to you this morning which shall close the bag for you, and we will fasten tight the mouth of the sack [1], which sermon will comprehend not only all that which I have preached to you now at this time but also moreover all that I have ever preached to you in my life; and perchance this will be the last one that I shall preach to you, - for perchance we may never more find ourselves together.

Of the first benefit which springeth up in the sinner when he doth return to God.

2. — Four benefits spring up in a great sinner when he doth return to God, having perceived his fault. The first good thing which doth spring up in him who hath been a sinner, either when he is in prosperity or in adversity, when he is hated or opposed, or despised, is prudence. As doth the ass, when it hath fallen once in a spot, it payeth better heed to where it doth place its foot, for fearing harm it doth guard itself from falling again into those sins, or even into others. O thou great coxcomb who doth remain ever fixed in sin, O thou unhappy wretch! O seest thou not that the ass doth teach how to save thy soul? The ass falleth not a second time, but thou, verily thou dost! And therefore I say that turning to God, with such love as this thou dost acquire much prudence. O little boys, you know when you are learning to write well, what scrawls you do make at first. Nor thou who art learning grammar, never wouldst thou learn if first thou didst not write poor Latin; so likewise do I say of one who would learn to ride, never

[1] That is, we will finish what we have to say to one another.

wilt thou learn to ride if thou dost not sometimes fall. So would I say to these aged ones. O old man, and thou, old woman, art thou here present? Yes. Hast thou fallen ofttimes into sin, again and again? Yes. Hast thou returned to God? Yes. Never wouldst thou have known what sin is, hadst thou not had experience thereof. *In antiquis est prudentia*[1]! In the aged is prudence, and knowest thou why? Because they have had experience, and have fallen many times and then walk more steadily, they take greater heed where they place their feet; and most of all when they find themselves in that age which is nearing death, they pray God for mercy, and thank God moreover that they did not die in their sins, and that they have had time to return to him; and he[2] confides no more in his own strength, thinking that it is not possible for him to fall but prays ever that God will aid him to withstand that he may not fall as he hath fallen in the past.

The second gain is humility with obedience.

3. — The second gain is humility with obedience. The soul which hath lived sinfully, and then doth find itself in evil estate, having transgressed and broken the commandments of God, and doth then perceive that it hath set at naught his admonitions, commenceth to return into itself, and saith, as David said: *Cogitavi vias meas et converti pedes meas in testimonia tua*[3] I thought upon my ways and turned me back from the path which was leading me into wrong, and set myself to keep thy commandments. And so having known them he believes in them, and would learn them and follow them. He believeth that which the holy Church doth hold, he heareth Mass and Vespers, he hath always the Our Father on his lips and in his heart; and all in order that he may do that which the Church commandeth him, both in regard of observing the feasts, and of keeping the fasts which are prescribed, so that he wisheth never to fall short in aught. And not only doth he wish not to fall short, but he wisheth even to add thereto! for he would fast on Friday out of reverence for the passion of Christ,

[1] « In the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days prudence » Job XII. 12.

[2] The aged man.

[3] « I have thought on thy ways; and turned my feet unto thy testimonies ». Psalms CLXVIII. 59.

and also on Saturday as well, out of reverence for his mother Mary. He doth endeavour to ascend higher than the Church doth command : he obeyeth the commandment, and thinketh also upon the counsel of holy men, and even surpasseth both the commandment and the counsel of holy men. He was never used to go to a sermon, and now he doth never lose one. Know thou in what manner a soul doeth which is well disposed ? It doeth as doth one of your citizens who is zealous in regard of your commune, and who as soon as he heareth the bell ring, so straightway he cometh to the council. So doth this man when he heareth the bell ring for the sermon, likewise straightway he goeth thither, because so he doth provide in the best way for the counsel of his soul. The bell is the trumpet of the soul, which doth proclaim a thing as you are used to do in your councils. Do not thou as he doth who is not disposed to do aught else than to go to the tavern in the morning early, and to sit there on the benches, speaking ill of whosoever passeth by the way !

The third benefit is compassion for others who as he sees are leading wicked lives.

4. — The third benefit which doth spring up in a sinner who returneth to God, is compassion for those who as he sees, are leading evil lives. Oh ! when a man or a woman who hath never fallen into any very grievous sin, seeth another who hath fallen therein, Oh, they make so much of it, that there is no peace to be had with them! Whereas, lay up in thy mind this which I would say to thee now at once. Knowest thou not that God did not leave the faith of the Holy Church to John, who was spotless and pure, without sin and without stain, but it was his will to leave it to Peter, who, among other sins that he committed, there was this, that he denied Christ? Why thinkest thou that he left it to him ? He left it so because he was fitted to have compassion on those who should fall into sin. Thou hast it that when the Lord was approaching his passion, he prayed for Peter, who was to deny him, and he said: Peter, I have prayed to my father that thy faith may never fail. Almost as if he should say : Peter, thou who hast denied me, see that thou shalt never drive him [1] away, but comfort him,

[1] The repentant sinner.

because, as my Father hath pardoned thee, who hast denied me, in like manner willingly will he pardon him. And because of this he left the faith to Peter. Peter was most zealous; even if we had no other proof you might be assured of it by this, that when the Jews came to take him[1] he drew his knife to defend his master, and cut off the ear of one of them. He thought he could save himself and all his companions, as well, but his legs did not avail; and therefore the Lord more willingly left the faith to him than te John, or to any one of the others, so that he might have compassion on those who should fall into sin, as if he would have said: Peter, when thou seest a sinner fallen into sin, remember that thou thyself also didst fall therein. If he had left it to John, who was a spotless ermine, pure and white, without the least stain, if a sinner entangled in sin had come to him, he would have said: ugh, ugh, ugh! Away with thee, away! And he would have been the cause that well nigh all the sinners would be driven away. Peter was merciful, because he fell into the sin of denying God, and it is said that since that he had denied God, he wept unceasingly, and he always carried a kerchief wherewith to dry his tears. Hearken how good that sin was, how much good came of it. And therefore I say that he who doth not fall can not have compassion for him who hath fallen. And this is the third.

Great fervour springeth up in the converted sinner.

5. — In the sinner converted to God there doth spring up also great fervour. *Ubi, habundat delictum superhabundat gratia*[2]. Where sins abounded there doth the grace of God more abound, when he doth turn to repentance. Thou hast the example of Mary Magdalen. O ye vain women, return to God as did Mary Magdalen, for I promise you if you will return into the right way of life, you will abound in greater grace than before you sinned. How much greater good doth he who hath committed a sin than he who hath not committed one! I choose this as an example, that many go their way so calmly and serenely that they never do any great evil, nor yet do they do any great good, they are of such a kind as thou knowest well, neither good nor

[1] Christ.
[2] Romans V. 20.

bad. If they were very, very good, it would be well. But being in so half-way a state it seems that they do never go beyond this. Many have been found among the worst, I speak not of the wicked, but of the very wicked, who return to God and who do so much good that it is a joyful thing. Likewise would I say that there are many cities which are disposed suddenly to do evil, and as quickly to do good, and this they do with great fervour, Blessed be that evil which maketh thee to return to God. And I say that one such as these is the city of Perugia, and as they are quickly disposed to evil, so quickly do they return to good. I never saw a greater happening than I saw there. They made so many « peaces » there that to see it was a great marvel that there could have been so many enmities as there had been. And I believe that very few « peaces » were made in which the man who had suffered the injury did not go to seek out him who had injured him, and to ask pardon of him. And there were many of those who went wearing the penitent's cord about their necks; so that as they are swift to do evil, so in like manner are they swift to turn back and to amend and to do good. So would I say to thee, Sienese people, return to the performance of good as thou hast attained to the performance of evil. There are certain of you who are of sweet nature, that is, who do not bear mortal hatreds; and if merely by chance enmity doth arise within them, thou wilt be able in one way or another to preach to them to some purpose. Some there are who are cruel, and who bear mortal hatred, yet after brief speech with them they become gentle lambs. Whence cometh this? It cometh from this, that in these harsh cruel men more aboundeth the grace of God than is perceived at once. Let no one go away.

The first thing that Friar Bernardine would bring before his Sienese belongeth to God.

6. — Three things there are which I would bring before you, my beloved children, - I hold and consider you as my children, because I elected myself as your father when you wished me as your bishop. First of that one which belongeth to God. God hath two arms, and with each arm he embraceth the sinner who doth wish to return to him. One arm is that of love, and the other is that of fear. The right is love, and the left is fear. *Laeva eius sub capite meo*

et dextera illius amplexabitur me [1]. If you would be loved of him, love him, and if you shall love, you will be loved, and he will give you all prosperity; and if you shall fear him, he will guard you from all persecution, from wars, from tempests, from hail, from pestilence, and from every evil. Amend yourself of your faults, and he will free you from sorrows and tribulations, since these come upon you only because of your sins. Moreover be mindful of the name of Jesus. Before this I have told you how you should reverence this name when you hear it spoken in Mass. Christ or Jesus, which are one and the same, to one and both see that you make an outward sign of reverence with knee, or head, or cap, the devotion springing always from your heart. But answer me this: if thou shouldst fall on thy knees, when thou hearest this name, seest thou not to whom thou kneelest? Thou dost kneel to God, the son of God. Who is he that hath not reverence for God, eh? To me that Hail Mary which you recite every evening bringeth great consolation, and you do well indeed; and you will find, as she is your advocate, that if you hold her in reverence and pray to her humbly, she will defend you and aid you in all your adversity, and deliver you from it. Moreover I would have you mindful of the feast days, Sundays, and holy days, and would have you look to it that you do not work then, save it be to the honour and glory of God. Moreover I would have you remember, officials, that you are bound to see that these feasts are observed, which are commanded by the Holy Church. The official is not given his post solely to punish him who doth evil, but also he is given it in order that he may bring about the performance of good. And if you do not bring the performance of good, when you have the power to do this, you will suffer for it. Look to it! for you will have also to render an account of this to God. Do you not perceive, that you can help that man to save his soul, who would otherwise lose it? Doth he work [2]? Now pay heed

[1] « His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me ». Cant. of Cant. II. 6.

[2] On feast days.

to this [1]. Moreover I wish to bring before your [2] minds the excommunications. Alas! my fellow-citizens *timete Deum*, *timete Deum*, fear God! O have I not told you, I and others as well, that the Pope is our God on earth? What is the reason wherefore you fear him not? Fear him [3], since you have the demon upon you, for I say to you that you are in the clutches of the devil, and it would not be a great wonder if the devil were to carry away your soul, your body, and your goods. Do away with those laws that you have made in regard of the churches [4]. I would also bring to your minds matters ecclesiastical. *Qui vos speruit, me speruit* [5]. Look to it that out of reverence for God, thou hast reverence for the priests, the friars, and those who have sacred orders, - for each according to his rank; the higher his rank the more honour shouldst thou do him, and not say: O he is wicked! Do thou thy duty and if he be wicked he will have to render an account thereof, but not to thee. Take the good, and pass by the evil. O that mother of mine, Monna Bartolomea [6], how often used she to utter these goods words: Take the good, take the good, and not the evil, for thou hast to render an account to God of the good which thou mightest have done, and not of the evil which another doth perform. And this it is I have wished to say to you in regard of that which doth belong to God: to fear God and to love him, to frequent the churches, the sermons, Mass and Vespers, and other virtuous exercises, and to this I urge you. As on the other days thou dost all for the sake of the body, to thy welfare and that of thy family, so such days as these give them to thy soul, to the glory and honour of God.

[1] Here he adresses the public.

[2] Of the Sienese.

[3] The Pope.

[4] The Saint's advice was listened to, and by decrees of Feb. 27, 1427 (by the Sienese reckoning) and of April 18, 1428, all the laws concerning ecclesiastical immunity were modified.

[5] St. Luke X. 16.

[6] Here it would seem that Saint Bernardine refers to his mother, who then would be not, as his biographers suppose, Donna Nera di Bindo Avveduti da Massa, but a Madonna Bartolomea, perhaps of the same family.

7. — But in regard of that which doth belong to thy neighbour I would say that there remain yet many « peaces » to be made; I pray that you will hold me excused [1], and thus I believe that you will accept my excuse. You must remember that I have been busied in regard of my sermons. I pray the Lord, or others, that they may bring it to pass that there may remain no peace to be made. Alas! for the love of God love one another. Ay me! do you not see if you delight in the ruin of one another that which will come upon you because of this? Do you not perceive that of yourselves you ruin yourselves? Oh! amend for the love of God; wait not until that God shall raise his hand against us with his scourge, for if you shall leave it to him to do you will have your hair well pulled for it. Love one another. In regard of that which I have done to lead you to make peace with one another and that you should be as brothers together, this have I done with all that zeal which I would have given to my soul. And as I say of this so likewise do I say of the other matters that belong to the commune: I have done it all for the honour and glory of God, and for the good of your souls and for your salvation. As I have said to you, I have done this for you as if you were indeed my own children; and I tell you further that if I might get you by the hair I would set you in peace, each and all, and there should be no one who would think that I set myself to do anything whatsoever at the request of any person; the petition of God alone doth impel me, and the honour and glory of God. I am guided by that which God saith. *Hoc est praeceptum meum ut diligatis invicem*. This is my commandment, my children, see that you love one another with perfect love. Let him love God who would be of the children of God. Alas! my children, move not God to wrath against you; and this is the second thing which I say to you. Moreover I must speak to you of this other thing, that I may not forget it, that you have pity upon your prisoners, and you, valiant women, see that four times a year you take a little thought for them; at Pentecost, on all Saints' Day, on the Feasts of the Resurrection and of the Nativity.

The second doth belong to thy neighbour.

[1] Because he has not been able to give himself up to bringing these about.

At all four of these times, each time the week before make provision so that at these times you may be so well provided that some aid may be given them. This is one of these seven works in regard of which it shall be asked of us by Christ on the last day, when we shall be examined by him. See to it that this be done, because it will be a thing most pleasing in the sight of God.

Friar Bernardine recommends the company of Death.

8. — Moreover I would say to you that you revive the Company of Death [1]. Oh, if you would consider how salutary a thing it is for the souls of those who are executed by the commune. If you think upon this a little, you will say that it is true. I hear that you are building here outside the gate a beautiful chapel so that the blood of those who are beheaded, may not be spilt, and so that the dogs may not lick it up. I say that you do well indeed: I hear that you have commenced it, - you should be encouraged to continue this good work. You have *Santo Luca* down there, and *Santo Basilio* up there at Camollia, and moreover the commune would do well to take it in hand, and they should be set in order for it is a shameful thing for your city that they should stand as they now stand, unroofed and in ruin. See to it that they are put in order. Moreover I would say that *ab antico* I know that there was a house where they did many good works. And while in other places there are men who do such things as that which I have seen, never saw I any one of them which did so much as the Company of the Virgin Mary [2]. I myself once long ago was one of them, and there were many good men there. I would recommend it to you that you never let it fall off. I have ordered in Lombardy that there be founded a house there wherein such rules and methods are observed as is done in this one: I say that it is a devout and holy thing; it is not a thing to wish to abandon, and therefore see that you maintain it.

[1] In others of his sermons also the Saint had made an appeal for the Company of Death. The members of this Company applied to the General Council on February 27th 1425, for an appropriation of fifty lire annually, to be used for the construction of a building where those condemned by the law might be executed.

[2] The Company of the Virgin Mary referred to by Saint Bernardine, is the well known Company of the *Disciplinati* which still exists.

9. — Now to my part. First I call to your mind as I have said at other times, that in regard of that which I have preached, that I have not said it as coming from me. *Doctrina mea non est mea: scilicet Dei, qui misit me* The doctrine which I have preached, and that which I have said to you, I have not said it of myself, but as one sent to you. I have said to you that which God commanded me that I should say to you, so that you have it not as coming from me. *Quia omnes homo mendax* Every man is wicked, so far as doth regard him in himself. Of himself he can not accomplish aught of good, except by the Grace of God, and therefore everything good cometh from him. If you would say: we have heard it from thee, I reply as did Christ: *Non enim vos qui loquimini, sed Spiritus Sanctus qui loquitur in vobis* It is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Ghost who speaketh in you. So do I say of myself: it is not I who speak to you, when I preach, but it is the Holy Ghost who maketh me to speak. Know thou that you hear nothing from me myself, but all cometh from God and if I speak as myself you never have aught; and one can not but speak something of himself. You may not have perceived my faults, but I am well aware of them, for I never do aught that in doing it I do not commit many of them. But that which I have said to thee in regard of the salvation of thy soul, and in regard of the right manner of life in your city, accept this as certain and true, for I assure thee and I do affirm it and confirm it, and give you all this consolation, and if you will look into it this is a more safe way of living than that which you have followed in the past. And if anyone should come after me who should wish to tell you the contrary of that which I have told you, you may know that the devil is in him, and perchance he will lead you into evil if you shall believe him, for his teaching will all be contrary to the doctrines of Christ. But I have indeed faith in you that you will not let yourselves be moved with ease, for even if any should say the contrary, believe it not, but be ever steadfast and stable, founded upon what is stable, having always your intention directed towards God. Moreover, I thank the magnanimous Rulers for the charity which they have shown towards me and

The third thing which Friar Bernardine recommends to them is himself.

likewise every citizen ; and I thank you all that you have borne with my words and have shown more love for me than I deserve. Also I would ask that you remember my soul, that you pray God for me, and I will pray for you. I think that I must go away to-morrow, and I know not whether we shall evermore find ourselves together again. Oh ! if ever I shall return to see you again, or if I shall meet you, or if any of you shall ever meet me, — for I intend to go into distant lands, and when one goeth far away he doth return only after a long time, — for the love which I have borne you, and do still bear you, I pray you that you may pray to God for me. And that he may give me grace to do his will, and that I may persevere in this art, so that to the glory of God I may instruct people, and direct them to the way of the commandments of God. And I leave you this charge, that you will say an Our Father and a Hail Mary for me every day ; and I will pray God that he may so illumine us by his grace that when we come to depart from this life we may render up our souls to him so pure and spotless that he will lead us all to his blessed glory, where we may dwell with him and with the glorious saints *in saecula saeculorum.*

And so having given his blessing he said : I leave with you the peace of the good Lord God, and pray to God for me. Amen.

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